MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE

OF THE

RIGHT HON. WARREN HASTINGS,

FIRST GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF BENGAL.

COMPILED FROM ORIGINAL PAPERS.

BY THE REV. G. R. GLEIG, M.A.

CHAPLAIN TO THE ROYAL HOSPITAL AT CHELSEA, AND RECTOR OF IVYCHURCH, IN KENT.

AUTHOR OF

THE LIFE OF SIR THOMAS MUNRO.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1841.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following volumes I offer to the public, not without a distressing consciousness that they do imperfect justice to a subject at once so important and so comprehensive as that which they have undertaken to discuss. Neither of any lack of zeal on my part to bring about a different issue, nor of the absence either of care or of assiduity in digesting the materials submitted to me, can I indeed accuse myself; for the compilation of the work has constituted my principal literary employment throughout the space of four entire years. Yet I feel, when all is done, that the results of my labours fall far short of the anticipations which I had ventured to form when they began; and that a larger share of indulgence must be sought for at the hands of my reader, than, under ordinary circumstances, I should be entitled to expect. Let me, however, tell my own tale with all the brevity

and candour which are becoming in one situated as I now am, and then throw myself, without hesitation, upon the considerate kindness of such as may take the trouble to follow the details of my explanation and judge of their fitness.

That the task which I have now completed—I do not say how imperfectly—was not an easy one, may be gathered from the following statement of facts:—Not long after Mr. Hastings's death, and at a period when, of the friends of his manhood, many were yet alive, it was proposed to Mr. Southey to become the biographer of the greatest statesman whom British India has produced. The proposition being acceded to, the whole of the family papers were put into Mr. Southey's hands, who kept them by him a good while, and then returned them with a frank avowal that he could not command the time and attention that would be necessary for the management of an undertaking so extensive and so complicated. Mr. Hastings's executors were much disappointed at the result; and the project lay for a time in abeyance, till by and bye the late Mr. Impey, the son of Sir Elijah Impey, and a man every way qualified for the undertaking, revived the idea. To him, in his turn, the voluminous documents

were committed, and in his possession they remained, if I mistake not, about six years. But Mr. Impey did nothing with them. His assiduity at the India House appears, indeed, to have been extraordinary, for he visited that great depôt of historical information every day; and the countless memoranda which I have discovered in his own handwriting, show that he left few of the Company's records unexamined. Yet not one page of the memoirs had he begun to write when he died, and all the hopes which the friends of Mr. Hastings's good name rested upon his exertions died with him. Once more, therefore, the papers were restored to the drawers and cabinets of Daylesford House, where, in absolute confusion, they remained, till, in the summer of 1835, they were finally handed over to me. I confess that I received them with unmixed satisfaction, because my opinion of Mr. Hastings's character and merits had long been formed; and I rejoiced in the thought that through me so illustrious a name might be in some sort redeemed from unmerited neglect. But as I certainly was not then aware of the stupendous nature of the undertaking on which I was about to embark, so I do not hesitate now to acknowledge, that had the truth been made

apparent to me, I should have declined it. That which Mr. Southey and Mr. Impey failed to effect, I had certainly no right to attempt. Nor after the attempt was made should I have gone forward with it, but for a constitutional weakness, if the feeling deserve no harsher name, which renders it positively painful to me to be foiled in any purpose of the sort, till I shall have exhausted both mental and physical strength in the endeavour to effect it. After many distressing pauses, therefore, and many hours and days of absolute despondency, the work has at length been brought to a termination, and now goes forth with a thousand imperfections upon its head, which no human eye can see more clearly than my own, but which I profess myself quite incompetent to remedy.

It will be seen that in the management of my work I have rendered Mr. Hastings as much as possible the narrator of his own acts and intentions. There can be no doubt in the mind of any thinking person as to the wisdom of this arrangement, more especially in cases where, like the present, consecutive series of letters have been even partially preserved. But the letters entrusted to me are not always consecutive; and it has unfortunately happened, that precisely at points where most of all it

was essential that I should find materials for my biography in the handwriting of the subject of it, or of his personal friends, such materials were wanting. This has been especially true in reference to Mr. Hastings's early history,—to that period in a great man's life which is often more replete than any other with interest, — when, forcing his own way to eminence through innumerable obstacles, he conveys to others the gravest lessons of wisdom and enterprise and moderation. Over that stage in Mr. Hastings's career a dense curtain is drawn, which his correspondence with Lord Clive can be said very imperfectly to raise; and I have been forced, in consequence, to generalize where I could have wished to proceed upon a different principle, by speaking more of the nature of the employments in which he was engaged, than of the condition, and habits, and personal occupations of the man. I lament this exceedingly, but I cannot help it, any more than I have been able to escape, in the course of the chapters which follow, from frequent epitomes of historical detail, without keeping which immediately in view, the reader might find in the correspondence much that would be to him unintelligible. It were idle to expect that they who peruse such epitome

will give the writer credit for the degree of toil which has been bestowed upon them; for that which we read with ease in ten minutes, we are all too apt to forget, may have cost as many days, or even weeks, in the composition. But the experienced in such matters know better. It is a far harder task to compress than to dilate, even when the subject may be familiar to us; the difficulties are increased a thousand-fold, when, for the attainment of a few grains of truth, we are compelled to wade through whole piles of old and often unmeaning correspondence. This has been precisely my case while striving from the letters of Mr. Hastings's friends, to fill up blanks in his personal history, which his own could not supply; and I am reduced at last simply to the expression of a hope that as the labour has been excessive, so the results may not wholly disappoint either my own wishes or the wishes of others.

Of the memorable impeachment to which Mr. Hastings was subjected, as the reward of a long life spent in his country's service, I have given no detailed account. I do not apprehend that any judicious critic will blame me for this; for as the charges brought against him were assumed to spring out of the vices which disfigured the whole

of his administration, so is their refutation far more satisfactorily set forth in a plain unvarnished narrative of the administration itself, than could have been done by lingering over the iniquitous proceedings with which his public life was consummated. For Mr. Hastings, like every other great and good man, is the best guardian of his own fair fame even in the grave. His actions and his motives alike speak for themselves. And as the issues of the trial were, as far as character was affected by them, altogether satisfactory, I cannot conceive that to follow the course of its progress could excite the interest or gratify the tastes of any one. Besides, the task was long ago performed with perfect impartiality by a pains-taking though anonymous compiler, who has woven into a consecutive history the events of each day as they befel; and to that volume I confidently refer all who may be desirous of farther information, touching both the violence of the accusers, and the forbearance and long suffering of the accused.

Finally there is one great and obvious truth of which no candid inquirer, when he sits down to try the moral probity, not of Mr. Hastings alone, but of other Englishmen by whom the affairs of

India have been administered, will ever be forgetful :—the whole of our proceedings in Asia, have been from the first, and still are, grounded upon moral wrong. We are usurpers there of other men's rights, and hold our empire by the tenure of the sword. For this neither the nation, nor individuals, may be in strict propriety responsible, because the current of events, and not their own ambitious plans, swept the India Company onwards to the position which they now hold; yet the facts are as I have stated them to be, and we cannot escape from them. Now unless the moralist be prepared to contend, that an English Governor of India is bound to betray the trust which is reposed in him,—that some rule of abstract right requires that he shall sacrifice the interests of his employers, whenever the efforts to sustain them may threaten to involve him in the necessity of encroaching still farther upon the rights of the native princes,—I think that he will be very cautious how he condemns proceedings which arise, not out of any selfish anxiety on the Governor's part to increase his own wealth, or his own renown, but from a conscientious zeal to uphold the honour and advance the prosperity of the commonwealth from which his authority is derived. Far be it from me

to insinuate, that in any of his proceedings Mr. Hastings was ever driven to cover private wrong with the cloak of public duty. Individual chiefs may have fallen before him, as they fell before his predecessor, and continue to fall now; but to the people at large his administration was a blessing, as the reverence in which his memory is still held may suffice to prove. And if it be the true end of all government to secure the greatest possible amount of good to the greatest possible amount of persons, then had he no cause to blush for the effects of his just and gentle, yet vigorous, sway over tribes, whom their native princes were either unable, or unwilling, to protect from anarchy.

To sum up all, Mr. Hastings has been accused of cruelty and oppression. The very persons whom he was represented to have most deeply injured, were among the foremost to declare their attachment to his person and government. Mr. Hastings has been accused of involving British India in an expensive war, for the mere purpose of gratifying his own inordinate ambition. The whole energies of his mind were devoted either to the maintenance of peace, or to remedy the blunders of others, which rendered war inevitable. Mr. Hastings has been accused of venality and corruption to an incal-

culable extent. He returned home after thirty-five years spent in the service of the Company, during thirteen of which he presided over the destinies of India, with a fortune barely adequate to support him in the rank of an English country gentleman. And even that, the prosecution to which political and personal hostility subjected him swept away.

Surely since the days when Athens sent her best benefactors into banishment, there has been no such instance of devotion to the public interests bringing to him who practised it so strange a reward. For if Mr. Hastings was corrupt, it was to advance the interests of England that he practised his corruption; if he was venal, she and she alone profited by his venality; if he was rapacious, into the public treasury all the fruits of his rapacity went. And so skilful was he in the management of materials, beneath which, for the most part, empires are crushed to pieces, that the very country in which he was described as building up this extraordinary fabric flourished and grew great under its shadow. Yea, and more than this. The system of administration, for introducing which Mr. Hastings underwent such a lengthened persecution, earned for his successors who acted faithfully up to it, the thanks

of the legislature, and the gratitude of the nation. So full of inconsistencies are all human affairs, and so little is even the best of men the master of his own fame and fortunes!

And now there remains for me only the pleasant task of expressing the deep sense which I entertain of the kindness of all those who, whether directly or indirectly, have afforded me assistance in the collection of my materials. Among these I am especially called upon to mention by name Sir Charles and Lady Imhoff, the near connexions and devoted attendants on the last hours of the deceased; Mr. and Mrs. Winter, the former the rector of Daylesford, the latter the amiable niece and companion for many years of the late Mrs. Hastings; Mr. Anderson, of St. Germains, and Mr. Augustus Thompson, of the Middle Temple, the sons of two of Mr. Hastings's oldest and most faithful friends; and last, though not least, Mr. E. B. Impey. To this latter gentleman, indeed, I am indebted for such details of Mr. Hastings's private habits and tastes as would have scarcely reached me through any other channel; and the value of such information can be estimated only by those who, like myself, have felt how unsatisfactory, in cases like the present, it is to depend,

in forming our judgment, absolutely on written documents, and on the sort of notion which they are apt to create of the moral feelings of the writer.

Finally, let me thank the Directors of the East India Company for the liberality with which they threw open for my inspection the voluminous records at the India House, and the consideration which induced them to afford me every accommodation and facility for making extracts from them. I am fully aware that mine is not a solitary case; for the same privileges which they afforded to me they are prompt to afford to all who seek them: yet is the personal obligation laid upon me in nowise diminished by the consideration that I am but one out of many on whom similar favours have been bestowed.

Chelsea College, December, 1840.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

Page

MEMOIRS,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

Early genealogy of the family of Hastings—Its downfall—Birth of Warren—His childhood—Goes to school at Newington Butts and Westminster—Elected a King's Scholar—Death of his uncle Howard—Appointment to India as a writer.

THOUGH the family from which Warren Hastings derived his descent possessed in ancient times a large share both of wealth and of influence, the state of decay into which it had latterly fallen was so complete, that the very birthplace of the subject of the following memoir cannot now with perfect accuracy be pointed out. Two parishes, one in Worcestershire the other in Oxfordshire, distant about five miles from each other, equally lay claim to the honour of having produced him. Of the former, Daylesford, his grandfather was undoubtedly the incumbent; and the traditions of the hamlet assert that in his grandfather's parsonage the future governor of British India was born. On the other hand, I found, upon visiting the spot, that not only is his baptism recorded in the parish

register of Churchill, but that a particular house in the village is pointed out to strangers as that in which he first saw the light. Moreover the occupants of the house in question—a brother and sister well stricken in years—assured me that their parents had frequently conversed with them about the event; and that their mother in particular, who died at an advanced age, perfectly recollected having been, when a child, disturbed from her sleep by the arrival of the accoucheur who attended Mrs. Hastings in her illness. Under these circumstances I am inclined to give the preference to Churchill over Daylesford as the place of Warren Hastings' nativity; more especially as there were peculiarities in his father's state and circumstances which go far to assure me that my judgment is correct.

I have spoken of the branch of the Hastings' family from which Warren drew his descent, as having been at one period in the possession of considerable power and very extensive estates. His grandfather, an antiquary of no mean reputation, traces back his own pedigree to Hastings the Dane. This may or may not be a dotage, but at least it is certain that the manor of Daylesford was held so early as the reign of Henry II. by one of the name, and that the records of the Tower of London make mention of Milo de Hastings as lord of the same place, in the thirty-third year of Edward I. From the same stock

sprang likewise the Barons of Abergavenny, who, by the marriage of John Hastings with the heiress of Aimer de Valentia, became Earls of Pembroke, and mixed their blood with the Plantagenets; and though the earldom died out through the failure of heirs, and the barony passed by marriage to Reginald de Grey, not yet were the Hastingses deprived of their nobility. The Earls of Huntingdon, once among the most powerful of the English aristocracy, took their rise from a younger branch of the house of Daylesford.

Time passed, and this old and illustrious race declined by degrees from their original splendour. The manor-house of Daylesford, where their hospitality had for ages been dispensed, fell into decay; and they transferred their residence to Yelford, called, in the ancient writings, Yelford Hastings, near Bampton, in Oxfordshire. Here, at the commencement of the great civil war, dwelt John Hastings, a worthy scion from a noble stock, whose devoted loyalty not only carried him personally into the field, but caused him to sacrifice lands, and plate, and money with a free hand, in order to raise funds for the supply of the king's necessities. Having expended the value of four large manors in the service of Charles I., John Hastings considered himself fortunate on the termination of the struggle, because he was permitted to redeem from confiscation the wreck of a princely

fortune, by making over to Speaker Lenthall his estate of Yelford.

From the effects of these sacrifices to principle the family of Hastings never recovered. The estate of Daylesford, grievously reduced in extent, remained indeed for awhile in their possession, and they continued to inhabit the manor house, though little better than a ruin. But even this, the last remaining monument of former greatness, their necessities at length compelled them to alienate. It was sold in the year 1715 by Samuel, the great-grandfather of Warren Hastings, to Jacob Knight, of Westbury in Gloucester, Esq., and a merchant of the city of London.

Such is a brief outline of the fortunes of the family from which Warren Hastings derived his descent. His grandfather, the second son of Samuel, last lord of the manor, having been educated for the Church, was presented, in 1701, to the rectory of Daylesford; a poor benefice, of which the advowson belonged to his father, but which never seems to have brought to the incumbent more than the means of a bare subsistence. Like others in his situation, however, he preferred to share his indigence with a partner, rather than suffer it alone; so he married, and had two sons, the elder born in 1711, the younger in 1715. The former, by name Howard, seems to have been a prudent, well-behaved, kind-hearted man; who,

obtaining a situation in the customs, lived and died respected. The latter, called Pynaston, deserves to be held in remembrance for nothing, except that he was the father of such a son as Warren. Nor, indeed, has it fared with him otherwise than it fares with the volatile and the improvident in general. His very children were always shy of alluding to him; so that the few records of his career which I have succeeded in picking up have been gathered from other, and, of course, less authentic sources.

It appears from the register of the parish of St. Andrew, Worcester, that Pynaston Hastings, bachelor, was, in the year 1730, married to Hester Warren, the daughter of Mr. Warren, the proprietor of a small estate called Stubhill, near Twining, in Gloucestershire. The youth could not have been at the date of his marriage more than fifteen years of age, and the consequences of a connexion formed so improvidently were such as never fail to ensue in like cases. The young couple soon began to experience the extremity of remorse and destitution. How they contrived to subsist at all I am quite at a loss to conceive, for the rector of Daylesford was by this time involved in an expensive law-suit respecting tithes with the new squire of his parish, and his means, slender at the outset, utterly failed in conducting it. Yet they did live together for two years, during which

his wife presented her boy-husband with two children—first a daughter, to whom they gave the name of Ann, and afterwards a son, in bringing whom into this world she brought her own miseries to a close. Warren Hastings was born on the 6th of December, 1732, and his mother died a few days afterwards.

The baptism of the child took place, as I have already said, in the parish church of Churchill, when he received, after his maternal grandfather, the name of Warren; but what became of him afterwards, or where the season of his infancy was spent, I do not know. His father seems to have quitted Churchill almost immediately on the decease of his wife; indeed I find him married again, soon afterwards, in the town of Gloucester, to the daughter of a butcher; but of the means by which he gained a livelihood there no trace remains, while those that mark his after-career are few and imperfect. The subject was one to which Mr. Hastings never voluntarily alluded; and, when questioned concerning it, he always appeared reluctant to answer: "There was not much in my father's history that would be worth repeating," said he to Mr. Impey, from whom I derive this anecdote, "except that, when he became old enough, he entered into holy orders, and went to one of the West India Islands, where he died."

Such was the commencement, inauspicious in

the extreme, of the long, and brilliant, and chequered life of the great and good man whose career I have undertaken to describe. It seems difficult to conceive how the dawn of human life could be, under any circumstances, more intensely overclouded; indeed I feel that I am not going too far when I venture to assert that had the individual thus brought into the world been the object of an ordinary providence, he never could have emerged out of obscurity. For, virtually an orphan from his mother's womb, his sole dependence was upon one, who, though he might watch over the opening of the child's faculties, was too poor to bestow upon them any extraordinary culture, and too little familiar with the world to find out for the youth an opening through which he might work his own way to eminence. It appeared, too, at one time, as if a life of poverty and neglect were all to which Warren Hastings had a right to look forward. His grandfather, utterly ruined by his contest with Mr. Knight, found himself driven to quit Daylesford when Warren was about two years old, and, accepting the curacy of Churchill, sent the child to a foundation or charity school, which still exists in the village Thus reduced to associate with the children of the humblest classes, and beholding little else at home than the squalor of poverty, it would have been the reverse of wonderful had the tone of the

boy's mind adapted itself to the condition of his body, in which case he would have slid, without so much as a murmur of regret, into the ranks of the agricultural peasantry, and been forgotten.

The Author of his being had, however, bestowed upon young Hastings a soul worthy of the noble line from which he was descended. Even at the foundation school of Churchill, he exhibited an ardent desire to excel, so that to this day the old people relate of him that "Warren aye took his larning kindly." He seems, likewise, to have possessed a vivid and active imagination, which delighted to exercise itself in dreams connected with the ancient honours of his house. He began early to inquire both into the deeds of his forefathers, and into the causes which had produced his own degradation, and he would listen by the hour together to any one who would talk to him of the munificence of the former proprietors of Daylesford, and the respect in which people held them. There is a small stream or brook, which, skirting the hill along which Churchill is built, falls, after passing Cornwall, the seat of another branch of the Hastings family, into the Evenlode, and with its new parent is finally absorbed by the Isis near Cotswold. "To lie beside the margin of that stream, and muse, was," said Mr. Hastings to a friend who was frequently his guest after the termination of his persecutions, "one of my

favourite recreations; and there, one bright summer's day, when I was scarcely seven years old, I well remember that I first formed the determination to purchase back Daylesford. I was then literally dependent upon those whose condition scarcely raised them above the pressure of absolute want; yet somehow or another, the child's dream, as it did not appear unreasonable at the moment, so in after years it never faded away. God knows there were periods in my career, when to accomplish that, or any other object of honourable ambition, seemed to be impossible, but I have lived to accomplish it. And though, perhaps, few public men have had more right than I to complain of the world's usage, I can never express sufficient gratitude to the kind providence which permits me to pass the evening of a long, and I trust not a useless life, amid scenes that are endeared to me by so many personal as well as traditional associations."

It is much to be lamented that Mr. Hastings, who, after playing so great a part on the stage of life, could hardly fail to be aware, that, sooner or later, he would become the subject of history, should have left no memoranda behind him, from which it is possible to draw out even a connected outline of the mode of his existence in boyhood and early youth. Even in conversation he appeared reluctant to enter upon the subject, and

when questioned respecting it, his answers were always brief and general. I am led from these circumstances to conclude that childhood and early youth were not with him seasons of much enjoyment, though whether overshadowed and oppressed by a mere sense of dependence, or subjected to the more direct and palpable mortifications which dependence too often brings in its train, I cannot undertake to say. All, indeed, that I have been enabled to discover respecting the first stage in his career amounts to this; that he remained in the country till the year 1740, when his uncle Howard, of whom I have spoken as holding a situation in the customs, took charge of him.

The first regular school to which he was sent, was kept by Mr. Pardoe, at Newington Butts. His master is said to have been a good one, but Hastings himself never referred to the period of his sojourn in that school with any degree of pleasure. He complained that the boys were half-starved; and attributed the delicacy of his own constitution, and his stunted growth, in a great measure to the wretched feeding at this seminary. He did not remain there, however, more than two years ere he was transferred to Westminster, to win the honours of which, and to be elected on the foundation, became immediately the object of his ambition. It chanced that there were among his contemporaries some of the cleverest lads of which

Westminster had for many years been able to boast; such as Lord Shelburne, Sir Elijah Impey, Cowper the poet, and others, the whole of whom, by the way, were his seniors in point of age, some of them by not less than two years. Yet nothing daunted by his acquaintance with their powers, he became an intense student, insomuch as well nigh to break down a frame delicate from the first, and now more than ever fragile. The result was, however, that when the season of trial came round, his triumph was complete. He was elected on the foundation at the head of all his competitors in the year 1747, and had in consequence his name engraved in golden characters on the wall of the dormitory, where it may still be seen.

I have made many anxious inquiries relative to his habits as a Westminster scholar, which have obtained for me, I regret to say, but imperfect information. Of those who were his contemporaries not one now survives; and the memories even of its most distinguished members soon fade from a public school. It is said, however, that neither his delicate constitution, nor his diminutive stature, in the smallest degree affected his spirit. Quick he was and mild, much addicted to contemplation, and a hard student; but he was likewise bold when necessity required, full of fire, ambitious in no ordinary degree, and anxious to excel in every

thing to which he addressed himself. His favourite pastime appears to have been swimming, in which he was very expert, and few could beat him with a pair of sculls; in other respects he was much as other boys are, except that his sweet temper and readiness at all times to oblige, rendered him a universal favourite.

Hastings had been a King's scholar at Westminster three years, and the greatest expectations were formed of his success at the university, when an event befel which gave a totally novel turn to all his prospects. His kind uncle Howard died, bequeathing him to the care of a Mr. Chiswick, on whom he had by relationship slender claims, and who does not seem to have over-rated their importance. I believe that the connexion between them took its rise from the marriage of Mr. Hastings's great grandfather with a lady of Mr. Chiswick's family; but how far their blood did or did not flow from a common fountain I do not know. It is certain, however, that Mr. Chiswick at once determined that Warren should not go on with his classical studies, and that Dr. Nichols, then head master of the school, was informed of the determination. "What," exclaimed the Doctor, when his favourite pupil announced to him his purpose of withdrawing from the school, "lose Warren Hastings—lose the best scholar of his year! That will never do at all. If the want of

means to keep you here—aye, and at college too—be the only hinderance, we can easily remove that. You shall go on with your education at my charges. I cannot afford to lose the reputation which I am sure to obtain through you."

The proposal—most delicately made—was alike honourable to the master and his pupil, but it could not be acceded to. For a few months longer Hastings remained where he was; but his new guardian eventually withdrew him. Being in the direction of the East India Company, Mr. Chiswick determined to send his ward in the capacity of a writer to Bengal; and, to fit him for the situation, he placed him for a time under the tuition of Mr. Smith, the teacher of writing and accounts at Christ's Hospital. This was in 1749; on the 14th of November in which year he signed his petition for the proffered appointment. It was acceded to immediately; and in the month of January, 1750, after fitting himself out as well as his slender finances would allow, Warren Hastings set sail on board the London East Indiaman for the place of his destination at Calcutta.

CHAPTER II.

General View of the Company's Governments in the beginning and middle of the Seventeenth Century—Summary of the Political State of India at the same Time.

THE field of exertion on which Mr. Hastings was about to enter differed in all respects so essentially from that which it has since become, that, in order to make the narrative of his after-life intelligible, it is necessary that I should preface what I am going to say with a brief account of it.

Early in the eighteenth century the rival East India Companies, which had for several years competed and wrangled for exclusive privileges, brought their disputes to an end, and under the title of the United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, were by Act of Parliament erected into a species of corporation. Regulating their affairs at home by means of courts of proprietors and directors, which again were presided over by chairmen, and carried on the details of business in committees, the company in question maintained abroad three principal settlements, one of which was established at Bombay, another at Madras, and the third at Calcutta, or Fort William, on the Hoogley.

These, which were called presidencies, were all

independent one of the other; each exercised supreme jurisdiction within its own limits, each was responsible only to the home authorities, and each consisted of a president or governor, and a council, appointed by commission from the company, and by the company liable to be recalled. Moreover, the council was not restricted as to numbers, which, on the contrary, varied according to the views of the directors at the moment, so that it consisted sometimes of nine, sometimes of twelve members, according to the presumed importance or extent of the business to be transacted. In like manner the council was made up of the superior servants of the company, not belonging to the military class, who were promoted according to the rule of seniority, except in special cases where directions from home interfered. Finally, in the president and council conjointly all power was vested, insomuch that no question could be determined, nor any regulation passed, except by a majority of votes.

The extent of territory over which these presidencies respectively exercised control was in every instance narrow. At Calcutta the company had acquired by purchase a domain which encircled their capital in a radius of perhaps seven English miles. Madras caused her will to be respected as far as the mount of St. Thomé; while Bombay gave the law to the island of Salsette and no

more. Other settlements there doubtless were, which in various parts of India looked to one or other of the presidencies as to their head; but, with the exception of Fort St. David, itself a minor species of capital, and Bantam, originally a presidency, none of them either obtained or deserved titles more lofty than those of factories. Such were those of Cossimbazar near Moorshedabad, Masulapatam, on one of the mouths of the Kishna, and Surat, in the bay of Cambay; and such were many others, which in this place it is not necessary to particularise.

The single purpose for which these establishments were erected being the prosecution of commercial devices, and the management of the parties engaged in them, it would be idle to try their forms of government by any such test as a comparison between them and the colossal machinery by which the affairs of British India are now kept in order. Though bound by solemn engagement to act according to the spirit of such instructions as might be transmitted to them from home, the British settlers in India were yet, in some sense, dependent on the native princes; that is to say, they held their lands on such tenures as the native princes might have dictated, and in all their trading operations were subject to such regulations as the native princes might impose. Accordingly, the sale of those commodities which they imported from

Europe, they conducted for a while in the simplest and easiest of all ways, namely, by sending them into the interior, in the common hackeries of the country, and exposing them to public auction at such warehouses as in the most convenient of the market towns they might have established. But the confusion which ensued on the breaking up of the Mogul empire rendered this mode of proceeding too insecure, and a rule was in consequence adopted, which hindered any person in the Company's service, or under its jurisdiction, from removing far from the coast without leave obtained from the governor and council of the station to which he belonged. From that time forth, therefore, the care of distributing the goods into the country, and introducing them to the consumers, was left to the native and other independent dealers.

While the import trade was thus managed, a more complicated machinery was required in order to purchase, and collect, and take care of the goods which constituted the export trade, or freight for England. As the country was not sufficiently advanced in point of wealth and civilization to possess manufacturers and merchants on a large scale — men who were capable of executing extensive orders, and delivering the goods contracted for on a specified day — the Company were obliged to employ their own agents to gather

together, here and there, in such quantities as presented themselves, the different articles of which the cargoes to Europe were composed. For the reception of these when collected, and their safe keeping till the ships from England should arrive, depôts or stations were needed. Hence the erection, at convenient points, of warehouses, counting-houses, and other apartments, where the business of the Company might be carried on and its agents lodged: in other words, hence the establishment of those factories which have already been described as intimately connected with each of the presidencies and dependent on them. This was the first step;—and the second was the providing for the Company's agents who might be stationed there, adequate protection against the attacks of marauders. On the native powers, shaken by continual revolts, no reliance could be placed, so the factories were inclosed by works, rude perhaps, yet adapted to the exigencies of the moment, and garrisoned partly by the Company's civil servants, each of whom was trained to the use of arms, partly by such a body of regular troops as the limited resources of the presidency could afford.

Of the manner in which the affairs of the factories were conducted, the most distinct idea will be formed, provided we confine our regard to that branch of the Company's trade which had for its object the exportation of manufactured goods to

England. In dealing for spices and other natural productions of the climate, the same arrangements were substantially adopted. But the case of the weavers is a specific one, and will serve our purpose better than any other. I need scarcely observe, that the weavers in India, like the labouring classes in general, were then, and are now, miserably poor; that their means of subsistence never exceeded the lowest point at which nature can be supported, and that he who desired to obtain from them a piece of manufactured cotton or silk, found it necessary not only to supply the funds wherewith to purchase the raw material, but to make constant advances towards the workman's maintenance while the work was going on. To manage all this, to deal with each weaver separately, to watch him while the web was in progress, so that he might not dispose of it to somebody else, could not but be a transaction of excessive detail; and if the demand happened to be great, it gave employment to a multitude of agents. A multitude of agents there accordingly were at each factory. First, there was the European chief, with his assistants more or less numerous in proportion to the importance of his station. Next, there was the banyan, or native secretary, through whom the whole of the business was transacted. The banyan, in his turn, hired a body of gomastahs, or native brokers, at so much per month. Each gomastah repaired

to the manufacturing town which was assigned to him, and fixing upon a house, which he called his cutcherry, there took up his abode. Again, the gomastah was provided with a competent number of peons, or armed servants, and hircarrahs, or messengers, whom he immediately despatched to summon round him the dallâls, pycars, and common weavers of the place. The dallâls and pycars, be it observed, were alike brokers, only that the one class was inferior to the other; for the pycars dealt directly with the weavers, whereas the dallâls dealt only with pycars. Thus, between the individual who produced the article required, and the agent of the Company for whom he produced it, not fewer than four separate agencies intervened—a ready means, if not a fruitful source, of trick and collusion, from which the highest and the lowest of the parties affected by it were almost equally sure to suffer.

Nor was it merely in giving his orders, and in seeing that they were fairly executed, that the chief of the factory was at once liable to be himself imposed upon, and sorely tempted to impose upon others. Attached to the European agent, and independent of his banyan, was in every instance a mohurrie or clerk, with a convenient number of peons and hircarrahs. This personage had the care of disbursing to the gomastah at the outset as much money as he might judge sufficient to purchase the materials out of which

the web was to be woven, as well as to afford subsistence to the weaver, during at least part of the time in which he might be occupied in weaving it. By and bye, when the job was finished, the cloth was removed into a warehouse, where each separate piece was marked with the weaver's name. And last of all, the gomastah held what he called his kattah; that is to say, he examined each piece separately, fixed the price which ought to be paid for it, and took account of the advances already made to the fabricator. It was then in a vast variety of instances, that the poor weaver sustained his heaviest loss. The gomastah did not care what price the article might fetch if exposed in open market. He gave only what his own generosity might suggest, and generosity in such cases rarely came up to the standard of justice.

For some time after the establishment of the United Company, the powers exercised by the president and council were at each of the presidencies wholly undefined. Representing a body which regarded all its agents as servants, the local authorities naturally adopted a similar tone, and as the individuals who acted under them had entered the service as the business of their lives, no impediments to the exercise of an unlimited authority were anywhere offered. For a long while, indeed, the power of life and death, when dealing with civilians, was not formally entrusted to them;

but they might arrest, imprison, and send to England; and they did so without scruple, on the authority of the charter granted by Charles II. in 1661, by which the presidents and council in their factories were empowered to dispense civil and criminal justice according to the laws of England. In 1726, however, a new order of things began, when there was established at each of the three presidencies a Mayor's Court, with power to decide in all civil cases without restriction, though subject to an appeal to the president and council. In like manner the mayor and nine aldermen were authorized to hold courts of quarter sessions, for penal judicature, in all cases except those of high treason. Finally a Court of Requests or Court of Conscience was instituted, where, by summary procedure, pecuniary questions, provided the sums at issue were inconsiderable, might be decided. It is not worth while to inquire how far these tribunals did or did not serve the purposes for which they were created. Men educated in the details of commercial life are not always qualified either by their learning or their habits of thought to dispense justice fairly, while in this particular instance there were jealousies at work which increased their difficulties fourfold. Between the Mayor's Court and the Council violent disputes arose; while the one complained that its authority was encroached upon, and the other

that its rights were wantonly disregarded or despised.

All this while, for the administration of Indian law to the natives who dwelt within the limits of the Company's jurisdiction, there existed the usual Zemindary courts, namely, the Phousdary for the arrangement of criminal matters, the Cutcherry where civil cases were heard, and the Collector's Court, into which all questions connected with matters of revenue were brought. Over these the Company's servants presided, being appointed by the governor and council, and holding their offices during pleasure; while the rule of judgment was the supposed usage of the country, or, to speak more correctly perhaps, the discretion of the court. Thus at each of the presidencies the judicial and executive functions were combined in the persons of the members of council, insomuch that the power even of a justice of the peace was intrusted only to them.

So far the president may be regarded as bearing to his council no other relation than that of *primus inter pares*. By indirect methods, indeed, he might accomplish almost any object on which he set his heart;—while ostensibly his will was dependent on that of the majority of his councillors. There were, however, certain departments in the management of which he stood alone. Whatever forces, for example, might be kept on foot for the defence of the

presidency and the factories dependent on it, were under his absolute command, and in him the right of nominating to commissions was exclusively vested. He was the sole organ, likewise, of correspondence with the native powers, whether it might be carried on by letter or otherwise; and to his discretion was left the choice both of the time when its results should be communicated to the council, and of the most convenient method of making such communication. These were important privileges, of the value of which every day's experience gave him proof. They contributed not a little to the extension of his power, and were guarded in consequence with a very natural jealousy.

With respect, again, to the remainder of the Company's servants, they were divided into four classes, namely, writers, factors, junior merchants, and senior merchants. The writer found employment in managing the details of business, in superintending the warehouses, and keeping accounts. At the end of five years he became a factor, when similar pursuits, though on a more extensive scale, occupied him; three years more saw him advanced to the rank of junior merchant, whence, after another period of three years, he passed into the order of senior merchants. From this latter class were chosen all members of council, heads of factories, and, indeed, persons whom it was judged expedient to employ in affairs of government:

while the president's chair itself was open to their ambition, provided a vacancy should occur, and the home authorities omit to fill it.

While things continued in this state, that is to say during the space of almost half a century, the attitude maintained by the East India Company towards other powers was exceedingly humble. Enemies it doubtless had, with whom its servants came occasionally into collision; but these were either the interlopers whom the ports of England sent forth to interfere with chartered rights, or colonists from Portugal, Holland, and France, who, like themselves, had taken root along the shores and islands of the Indian seas. Against any of the native princes the Company's servants thought not, except in the last extremity, of making a stand; and as to visions of conquest and dominion, these seem never to have entered into their minds. Happy men were they so long as the nabobs and soubahdars left them in quiet possession of their settlements, and permitted them, amid the wars and confusion which prevailed around, to carry on their trade unmolested. But this state of things could not endure for ever. The breaking up of the Mogul empire brought such a multitude of combatants into the field, that it was impossible for the English to adhere to their pacific policy; and it would be hard to decide whether they were more surprised or alarmed when they

found themselves come forth from every quarrel in which they took part the gainers. The annals of the human race produce no parallel instance of a people driven against their will, by the mere force of circumstances, to power and extensive dominion. The East India Company desired nothing more than space and room enough for the maintenance of their commercial depôts. The current of events swept them along with it, till they have become masters of the whole continent of India. It will be necessary to sketch, with a rapid hand, some of the principal causes which led to this great issue.

The Mogul empire had attained to its utmost height of grandeur but a few years prior to the consolidation of the rival Companies in London. Aurungzebe, the most illustrious of the descendants of Baber, filled at that time the throne of Delhi, and wielded his power with such vigour and effect, that almost the whole of what we called India obeyed his mandates. From the Indus to the Brahmapooter there was scarce a district or principality which refused either to accept its rulers from his hands, or to pay him tribute. The Mahrattas alone, a predatory horde which had risen into note about the middle of the sixteenth century, offered a feeble resistance to his arms; yet even they were reduced to find shelter in the fastnesses of the Concan, whither it was difficult for

regular troops to follow them. In assuming to himself, therefore, the title of Lord of all India, this great man advanced no claim which the actual condition of affairs appeared not to sanction; for even the Mahrattas were not regarded as a rival power, but only as a nest of rebels or plunderers, whom the physical obstacles of morass and deep wood hindered the Emperor's lieutenants from extirpating.

While the sceptre was wielded by such a hand as this, nothing could be more regular or uniform than the system of administration which prevailed throughout the empire. Divided into provinces, which obtained various titles according to some rule into the origin of which it is not worth while to inquire, we find it governed by chiefs who owed their nomination to the will of the sovereign, and were at any moment liable to be superseded, and set aside. Thus, while the capital, with a vast district dependent on it, was managed under the emperor, by the vizier, all that tract of territory which lay south of the Nerbudda, looked to the Soubahdar of the Deccan as to its immediate head. In like manner, as the whole empire was divided into three principal parts, so each of these was subdivided into an indefinite number of lesser parts. In Hindoostan, for example, there were Bengal, Bahar, Oude, Malwa, and many more, over each of which a distinct viceroy presided;

whilst the Deccan could boast of Arcot, the Circars, Berar, and Tanjore, all managed independently one of the other, yet all equally held accountable in their respective governments to the Soubahdar. Moreover, that the dependence of these subordinate governments on the supreme power might be complete, care was taken to separate in each the management of the affairs of the revenue from the command of the military force, and the general administration of justice. Each viceroy was checked and controlled by the presence at his court of a dewan, or finance minister, who, like the viceroy himself, obtained his nomination at Delhi, and was there expected to give an account of the matters which were entrusted to his charge.

Such an order of things was manifestly dependent for its pliability on the personal vigour and talents for business of the Emperor. While Aurungzebe lived, the empire continued both nominally and really a whole. His death, in 1707, shook the ill-assorted fabric to its base. There was first a contest between his three sons for the succession. There was next, the necessity imposed upon the conqueror of conciliating the goodwill of the chiefs who raised him to the throne. There was, thirdly, the natural result of civil war within the empire itself—an opportunity afforded to the Mahrattas, of which they were not slow to avail themselves, of re-establish-

ing more than the semblance of a kingdom. And last, and worst of all, Nadir Schah broke in from Persia, and threw all things into confusion. Then began viziers, soubahdars, and other governors of provinces, to deal with their delegated power as if it were inherent in themselves, till by and bye, not only was the Deccan severed from the rest of the empire, but such minor chiefs as the nabob of Bengal and the vice-king of Oude learned to act as if they were independent princes.

In the endless struggles, both foreign and domestic, which throughout a quarter of a century rent the empire to pieces, the English took no part. As often as one or other of the provinces within which their settlements stood became the seat of war, then, indeed, the servants of the Company assumed a defensive attitude, but their preparations never went farther than to put themselves in a condition to repel violence, should it be offered. In the contest, whatever it might be, which was going on, they did their best to preserve a strict neutrality. On the other hand, the native princes, as well during the vigour as in the decline of the empire, treated them on almost all occasions with singular favour. Partly because they reaped large profits from the European trade, partly because they did not as yet see reason to be jealous of a few European settlers on the coast,

they not only permitted them to dwell at peace, but extended to them commercial privileges far greater than those which were granted to the native merchants. Accordingly, neither the revolutions which went on at Delhi, nor the establishment of an independent sovereignty in the Deccan, in any way interfered with the routine of business. Continuing, at least in Bengal, to pay to the public treasurers the sums which had been fixed as composition in lieu of transit duties, they sent their agents and servants as usual into the interior; and found that their dusticks, or passports, were universally respected, wherever there existed any thing like a settled government.

With these privileges the English were content, and had they been the only European settlers in India, it is extremely probable that they never would have looked beyond them. But they were not the only European settlers in India; the French, after repeated efforts, had succeeded, about 1720, in establishing themselves both among the islands and on the continent; and being at all times more disposed to indulge in dreams of glory than in details of business, they soon began to play a part in the political game which they beheld in progress round them. Their first great measure was to carry the war, which broke out in 1744, between France and England, to the distant shores of the Carnatic. Being greatly superior

both by sea and land, they made themselves masters of Madras, and reduced the affairs of the English East India Company to a very low ebb. But the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle restored to the Company their ancient local capital, and in some degree forced upon them a change of policy. I am not going to repeat the thrice told tale of the great war of succession in the Carnatic; far less to contrast with the magnificence of M. Dupleix's views, the petty devices and ill-assorted schemes of his rival. My purpose is sufficiently served when I state that the treaty of concord was scarce ratified between them, when the French and the English Companies found themselves arrayed on opposite sides, in a struggle which, begun for the ostensible purpose of giving a nabob to the Carnatic, was, in point of fact, to decide by which of these two European nations the destinies of India were to be guided.

CHAPTER III.

Hastings arrives in India—Employed in the Secretary's Office—Removed to Cossimbazar—Rupture with Suraj ud Dowlah—War—Hastings serves as a Volunteer—Suraj ud Dowlah dethroned—Hastings' first Marriage.

SUCH was the condition of affairs in India, as related both to the Company and the native powers, when Warren Hastings made his first appearance on a stage where he was destined, by and bye, to play so conspicuous a part. The war of the Carnatic was in full progress, and all the powers of the Deccan, including the Mahrattas as well as the English and the French, took part in it. North of the Nerbudda, there was confusion in every quarter. The emperor Ahmed Shaw, threatened on all sides by his refractory chiefs, was without power in his own capital. The Rohillas, in open rebellion, had not only established for themselves a sort of independence, but threatened to give law to Delhi itself, while the Mahrattas, in possession of all that tract of country which extends from Orissa to the Western Ocean and from Agra to the Carnatic, were become a terror and a scourge to the surrounding provinces. From the three eastern governments alone, the valour and ceaseless activity of Alaverdi Cawn excluded them; and even he, in his extreme old age, was glad to purchase rest from

unceasing warfare by partial submission. Yet in the midst of all these troubles the English continued to maintain themselves, not by the terror of their arms, or their skill in diplomacy, but as a body of merchants, and nothing more. It is true that when the alarm of the Mahratta invasion was at its height, they applied to the Nabob for permission to fortify the presidency, and having obtained it, they threw up a citadel, and dug a ditch: but Alaverdi, though he so far yielded to the necessities of the case, was immovable on another point concerning which they experienced at least as much anxiety. He would on no account permit them to interfere with the French settlement at Chandernagore, insisting that whatever grounds of quarrel there might be among the Europeans in distant regions, the peace of his country should not be disturbed by them. Accordingly while in the sister presidency of Madras men planned and fought for political ascendancy, in Calcutta there was at least the semblance of repose; and the affairs of trade went forward as briskly as the straitened means at the command of the Company would allow.

Into a community thus circumstanced, Warren Hastings, on the 8th of October, 1750, made his entrance. He did not come alone, for I find among his papers a fragment which, touching upon

the principal events of his boyish days, states that he was the last of eight young men who composed the list of the establishment for that year. Unfortunately, however, I cannot find more: "This is all," says he, "that I shall retain in writing of my private history, though the particulars of it if known might afford much subject of curious speculation, both from their influence on the temper and disposition of mind which constituted my public character, and from one circumstance of peculiar uniformity attending the whole course of my existence to its present moment, and probably to its ultimate and now not remote period—that of a solitary insulated wanderer through life, placed by His will who governs all things, in a situation to give birth to events which were connected with the interests of nations; which were invariably prosperous to those of his own, but productive to himself of years of depression and persecution, and of the chances of want only relieved by occasional, and surely providential means; though never affecting the durable state of his mental tranquillity." How much is it to be regretted that he who could thus express himself, should have been induced by any consideration of inferior worth, to withhold so great a lesson from mankind; for there can be little doubt that matters of which he speaks as the sources of "curious speculation," would have conveyed

to such as examined them with a philosophic eye, instruction of the gravest kind, and on the most important of all human subjects.

I took occasion in a previous chapter to explain the nature of the duties which were imposed, at the period of which we are now speaking, on junior civil servants of the Company. To these, on his arrival, Hastings proceeded to apply himself, though under whose auspices, or with what degree of relish on his own part, there are no records in existence which authorize me to say. All that I have been able to ascertain, indeed, in reference to this portion of his career is, that he remained two full years in Calcutta, during which he was employed as an assistant in the secretary's office; and that on the 1st of October, 1753, he was removed to the factory at Cossimbazar. There, as well as in the capital, his occupations were for a time such as fell to the lot of junior servants in general. He had little else to attend to than matters of detail, and we know nothing of him farther than that he seems to have trodden, unnoticed and therefore conscientiously, the even tenor of his way. For though an anonymous writer in the Gentleman's Magazine has described him as devoting much of his time to the acquisition of the Persian language, Mr.
certain manuscript notes which are now before me, gives no countenance to the statement. " I never acquired," he says, " a profound knowledge of the

Persian, and what I did know of it was acquired only from official practice."

Throughout a space of rather more than two years, subsequently to his settlement at Cossimbazar, there occurred but a single event in the personal history of Warren Hastings of which it is necessary to make mention. This was his nomination in 1755, to the council at the factory, an office of greater trust and more liberal emolument than he had yet held; for of his movements from point to point, according as the exigencies of the moment chanced to require, nothing more can be said than they were all in the ordinary routine of the service. But Hastings had fallen upon times when each new day might be expected to bring with it such changes as should affect the fortunes, not of individuals only, but of nations. Alaverdi Cawn, the steady friend of the English, was a very old man, whose death might from time to time be expected, while the person whom he had chosen to be his successor on the musnud was well known to regard all foreigners with less than indifference. And the calamity, so long anticipated, befel at last. On the 17th of January, 1756, the aged Nabob gave up the ghost. The throne was immediately seized by his grandson Suraj ud Dowlah, and the worst fears of those who knew him best, and entertained the gravest apprehensions from his violence, were more than realized.

Of the occurrences that followed, including the

Nabob's cruelty to his relations, his breach with the English, and subsequent march upon Fort William, I am not in this place required to give an account. They are but little connected, at least directly, with the personal history of the great man whose biographer I have undertaken to be; neither can I discover among his papers any scrap or fragment, which seems to throw a new light upon them. Yet were they in their results of the gravest importance to him. It is well known that when the factory at Cossimbazar surrendered, he, with Mr. Watts, and the rest of the Europeans employed there, became prisoners to Suraj ud Dowlah. They were sent off without loss of time to Moorshedabad, where, however, they not only suffered no violence, but appear to have been treated with much kindness. "I was made a prisoner," says Mr. Hastings, in a memorandum which has been preserved, "but permitted to go at large; Mr. Vynett, the chief of the Dutch factory at Cullapore, giving bail for my appearance." Nor is this all: "Mr. Drake," continues the same memorandum, "and his council wrote to me from Fullta, the place of their residence near the mouth of the river after their flight from Calcutta, desiring me to send them intelligence from Moorshedabad, and to that correspondence I owe my first consequence in the service."

The correspondence alluded to in this extract is

to be found among the records at the India House. It places the character of Hastings, considered as a public man, in an exceedingly favourable light, and shows that already his judgment, as well as political courage, had matured itself; but it is at once too voluminous and too technical to warrant the insertion of any portion of it here. I content myself, therefore, with giving its substance in my own words; nothing doubting that even this imperfect view of the case will sufficiently justify Mr. Hastings in his encouragement of the honest pride, with which in after life he never failed to look back upon it.

It will not be forgotten, that when Fort William ceased to be tenable; or, to speak more accurately, when their personal fears represented it in this light to themselves, Mr. Drake, the governor, with a large portion both of the European and native inhabitants, fled to their ships, and left the garrison to its fate. The fugitives took shelter in Fullta, an island of the Hoogley; narrow in its dimensions, and perfectly barren; where they established themselves in absolute dependence on the fleet, even for the means of subsistence from day to day. Expresses having been previously sent off to apprise the Madras government of their danger, they flattered themselves that from that quarter supplies would reach them; but long before any such could arrive, the horrors of famine began

to stare them in the face. Under these circumstances, they came to the conclusion that it would be best to throw themselves on the clemency of the Nabob at once; and Major Killpatrick was directed to write in a submissive tone to request that a supply of provisions might be afforded them.

This letter the Dutch authorities at Chinsura refused to forward; as indeed they had previously declined all interference in the business: whereupon Major Killpatrick sent it to Mr. Hastings, with a request that he would get it translated into Persian, and place it, without loss of time, in the hands of Suraj ud Dowlah.

Mr. Hastings so far obeyed these instructions, that he caused the letter to be translated into Persian; but he did not present it: because he believed that the moment was unfavourable for such a course, and his moral courage did not shrink from the responsibility of avoiding it. The nabob was involved in difficulties nearer home, which, according to Mr. Hastings's view of the matter, might render him anxious for an accommodation with the English almost on their own terms. It appeared that the rebellious governor of Purneah was not only determined to keep his place, but that having obtained from the emperor a commission which nominated him to the nabobship of Bengal, he was in arms to assert his claim to the

latter dignity. Meanwhile Suraj ud Dowlah, the slave of his own passions, and as treacherous as he was violent, had quarrelled with his chiefs, both civil and military; one of whom, Jugge-seat, he cast into prison, because he presumed to remonstrate against a plan which was proposed for exacting a large sum of money from the merchants. Such an act of violence and folly could not be endured even at Moorshedabad. Jaffier Aly Cawn, the commander in chief of the army, with other leaders subordinate to him, instead of pushing, as they had been desired, against the rival Nabob, returned to the capital, and throwing down their arms, declared that they would never take them up again unless a regular phirmaun should be procured from Delhi, and Jugge-seat restored to freedom. Nor was this all. Intelligence came in that the emperor, with his son and vizier, were on their march to reduce the provinces. The Mahrattas, too, were moving: in a word the affairs of the nabob were in absolute confusion.

It was Mr. Hastings's opinion that the interests of the Company would be best served by abstaining, under such circumstances, from all negociations, particularly as the English were never spoken of at court in terms which implied the continuance of a hostile feeling towards them. But his views were not approved of at Fullta. He

was again directed to present the letter, and again had the boldness to hesitate: indeed, when he did act upon the suggestions of his superiors at last, it was with such excellent skill, that by Suraj ud Dowlah the extremities to which the English were reduced seem never to have been surmised. Hastings kept his letter by him till the cloud which hung over the Nabob's fortunes appeared to have dispersed, and then he laid it, not before the Nabob himself, but before his dewan, whose disposition was friendly. The results were that a bazaar was opened, by means of which the wants of the fugitives were supplied, without any abject display of weakness or anxiety on their parts; of which Suraj ud Dowlah would have certainly availed himself only to aggravate their sufferings and establish a permanent influence over them.

Besides this, I find in the disjointed papers that have reached me, traces of another secret intrigue in which Mr. Hastings was at this time engaged; but which, as he never seems to have approved of it, either in its details or its design, so in his hands, at least, it came to nothing. I allude to a secret correspondence with Jugge-seat, and others of the discontented merchants and nobles of Moorshedabad, into which, at the suggestion of Ormachund, a name of ill-omen in Indian history, the English were prevailed upon to enter. As far as I can

trace the story, it is this. Ormachund, a traitor doubly dyed, who has been compassionated in the termination of his career, only because care has not been taken to watch his history in its previous stages, appears already to have conceived the idea of aiming at a revolution in Bengal. A revolution in Bengal, however, would not serve his purpose, unless the English should be persuaded to commit themselves to its accomplishment; because his single object was to extract money either from their fears or their ambition, and the annals of the times have recorded how nearly he had succeeded. Accordingly, having persuaded the members of council that the project was feasible, he wrote in their name a letter to Jugge-seat; which letter they caused their native secretary to transcribe; and then sent it to Mr. Hastings, with general instructions how to proceed. I do not feel myself in a condition to trace out the meanderings of this extravagant scheme, further than to state, that the part played in it by Mr. Hastings was very inconsiderable. Ormachund, indeed, appears to have established for himself a good name with his employers, which he retained only till the superior sagacity of Lord Clive brought the truth to light: but his plot came to nothing; and Mr. Hastings, whether betrayed by him or not, found his situation at Moorshedabad so un-

comfortable, that he was glad to make his escape as soon as possible, first to Chunar and ultimately to the island of Fullta.

Of the events that followed, including the defeat and death of the Purneah nabob, the return of Suraj ud Dowlah to his capital, and the arrival of Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive in the river, it is unnecessary for me to make any particular mention. Neither is it my province to describe the military operations that ensued, as well for the recovery of Fort William as subsequently to that achievement; but I am bound to put the fact upon record, that in most of these, including the battle of Booj-booje, and the several affairs in front of the presidency when the Nabob for the second time invested it, Mr. Hastings took personally a share. He carried a firelock as a volunteer, and did his duty as became him. It would seem, moreover, that even in those stirring times, other and more suitable employment was found for talents like his than that of the simple musketeer. While the Nabob hesitated in carrying matters to an extremity, and desired, after the recapture of Fort William, to try the effect of negociation, Mr. Hastings was appointed, in connexion with Mr. Amyatt, to act as the representative of his nation; and in this, as in former instances, the conduct of the youthful diplomatist fully justified his seniors in the choice which they had made. The nego-

ciation terminated, it is true, unsatisfactorily for the present; that is to say, to the demands made by the English, Suraj ud Dowlah would not consent; but of the wisdom of the demands themselves nobody enterta ned a doubt, and after a second trial of strength in the field they were, in the most important, at least, of their stipulations, cheerfully conceded.

Of the judicious behaviour of Messrs. Hastings and Amyatt while conducting this business we require no better proof than is afforded by the tone of bitterness which marked a future correspondence between the Nabob and Colonel Clive. After the repulse of the former from before Fort William, and his flight upon Moorshedabad, he lost no time in reopening the negociation; and it is worthy of remark, that for the abortive issues in which it had terminated at the first, he laid all the blame upon the English Commissioners. They had treated him, he said, with intolerable insolence and neglect. They had misrepresented him to his friend the English commander. They had entirely mistaken, either through ignorance or malice, the amount of the concessions which he was willing to make. In a word, he accepted the terms, the proposal of which by Mr. Hastings had so violently excited his anger, and promised ample compensation for the losses sustained both by the Company and by individuals during the war. On

one point only, and I notice it because its consequences proved by and bye to be very serious, the second treaty differed essentially from the first. Into the former a clause had been introduced which secured from search and molestation of every sort, all boats and goods, protected by the Company's dustuck, while in progress to and from Fort William. From the second this clause was entirely omitted; and out of that omission arose, beyond all doubt, the misunderstanding and wrongs which gave its character to a future period of English history in India.

The peace thus concluded with Suraj ud Dowlah was felt by Colonel Clive to be necessary, however little he may have ventured to count upon the chances of its continuance. For a full month previous to the ratification of the treaty both he and Admiral Watson had known that there was war declared and actually begun between England and France; and independently of their apprehensions of the arrival on the coast of reinforcements to the French garrison at Chandernagore, they justly dreaded the co-operation of the troops already in occupation of that place with the numerous, though undisciplined, armies of the Nabob of Bengal. Besides, Bussey was not far distant, M. Law was nearer at hand, and the union of all or even a portion of their respective corps with Suraj ud Dowlah must give to him a

preponderancy such as the English would find themselves unable to sustain. Hence the readiness with which, in the moment of victory, Clive consented to treat; and hence, too, another act of statesmanship of which, to say the least of it, the morality is much more questionable. The governor of Chandernagore had been kept quiet during the progress of hostilities with the Nabob by the establishment between him and the English of a system of strict neutrality. But the necessity to the English of adhering to that system no sooner ceased to be felt than Clive made up his mind to abandon it, and preparations were forthwith set on foot to reduce the French settlements in Bengal. In spite of a stout resistance, and in defiance of protests and reclamations, these, one after another, were captured. Great and not unmerited offence was thus, for the third time, given to Suraj ud Dowlah; and for the third time both parties braced themselves to a renewal of the struggle.

With the progress and results of this last and decisive struggle every reader of history is acquainted. Meer Jaffier, the Nabob's commander-in-chief, having been gained over by Clive, promised to join the English on the day of battle; and the English in consequence pushed on to Plassey, where they encountered and overthrew the flower of the Bengal army. This was followed by the triumphant entry of the victors into Moorshe

dabad; by the flight, and capture, and death of Suraj ud Dowlah; by the formal advancement of Meer Jaffier to the throne; and by the ratification of a treaty of eternal friendship and alliance between him and the East India Company. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the terms of this treaty were in évery respect favourable to the English. Besides ample gratuities to the immediate actors in the drama, enormous presents made to Clive, to Watson, and to the officers and men serving under them, the new Nabob undertook to make large advances to the Company, under the plea of remunerating them for the expenses of the war; to confirm all the privileges, both of territory and commerce, which had been granted to them by his predecessors, and to exclude the French, and indeed all other European nations, from forming establishments within his coasts. Finally, he consented to receive at his durbar an English resident, with the right of constant access to the Nabob's presence; and Mr. Scrafton being nominated to the important office, Clive reported to his employers in Leadenhall-street that the tranquillity of the country was restored.

Great things were by these means doubtless accomplished, yet they proved but the preludes to greater still. It very soon appeared that having given a nabob to Bengal the English were bound to maintain him there; and the endeavour to do so

involved them in transactions with which, as the biographer of Warren Hastings, I am very little concerned. There broke out at Patna, for example, a conspiracy which, without the assistance of the English, Meer Jaffier declared himself unable to repress, and troops were in consequence sent to his support. By and bye the resident reported that "avarice had taken such deep root in the Nabob's mind that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to make him comply with the remaining half of the treaty in ready money." Yet the truth seems to have been that Meer Jaffier, in his eagerness to ascend a throne, had promised a great deal more than the low condition of his exchequer and the impoverished state of the provinces could afford; and that the English, entirely discrediting this fact, charged upon avarice a delay which originated in the absolute exhaustion of his means. Still the same policy which had dictated his elevation to the musnud required that he should be supported there. Accordingly while they continued to press the liquidation of the debt, and urged him to mortgage his very revenues should the measure be necessary, they never withdrew from him their military protection, which abundantly sufficed to put down rebellion wherever it chanced to appear, and checked the progress of a hostile movement which the Mogul himself seemed at one period disposed to make.

Of the part played by Mr. Hastings in the management of these affairs, or whether he played any part in their management at all, I am entirely ignorant. Not a scrap has been preserved of his correspondence during this stage of his career from which it might be possible to collect a scintilla of information, and tradition, as may well be imagined, has long died out. Yet I learn, from the same source which has more than once availed me already, that at least one event occurred in the interval between the commencement and the termination of these great revolutions, which could not fail seriously to affect him for good or for evil; I allude to his marriage, in 1756, with the widow of a Captain Campbell, who seems to have died in the military service of the Company, but concerning whom no other record has been preserved. With this lady Mr. Hastings formed an acquaintance during the occupation by the fugitives from Fort William of the island of Fullta. He paid his addresses to her, was accepted, and in due time made her his wife. But the union, whether happy or the reverse—for on that head, too, tradition is silent—was not of long continuance. After bringing him two children, one of whom, a daughter, died on the nineteenth day after its birth, while the other, a boy, survived only long enough to be sent home for the purposes of education, Mrs. Hastings fell a victim to the climate, and was buried by her

husband at Cossimbazar, where, at the period of her last illness, he was resident. These are but meagre details of the early life of one whom Providence had destined in after years to fill so large a space in the minds of his contemporaries. Yet they are all that a long and patient research have enabled me to offer, and I therefore pass at once, not less disappointed than my reader, to what may be termed a graver chapter in this history.

CHAPTER IV.

His residence at the Court of Moorshedabad—Correspondence with Lord Clive—Wins the good opinion of his Employers.

HITHERTO the career of Warren Hastings, though abundantly honourable to so young a man, had been of necessity obscure; the time was now come when for the exercise of his talents a wider and more appropriate field should be opened. Sir John Malcolm has said that it was Clive who first took notice of the young civilian's rare aptitude for public business, and placed him in a situation favourable to the development of his powers. I have no doubt that the statement is substantially correct; yet let honour be given where it is due, even in a minor degree. In the records at the India House it appears that Mr. Watts had some share in this excellent work, inasmuch as it was during Mr. Watts's temporary occupation of the president's chair at Fort William that Hastings was removed from the factory at Cossimbazar and placed about the Nabob's person at Moorshedabad. But the appointment, as first settled, had this anomalous character attached to it, that it neither withdrew Hastings absolutely from his duties as member of council at the factory, nor gave him all

the powers which of right belong to a resident at the court of a native prince. Still it was in every point of view creditable to so young a servant of the Company, because indicative of the perfect confidence which his superiors reposed in him, and the duties attached to it, arduous as they were, he discharged entirely to their satisfaction. He collected, with infinite difficulty, a considerable portion of the outstanding balances that were due from Meer Jaffier to the Company; he put down, by the exercise of a sound discretion, more than one tumult in the city; he conducted many delicate negociations both with the Nabob and his great officers of state, so as to call for the warm approbation of the council; and he rendered to the Company another service, which was regarded at the moment as not the least important of the whole. In the course of his indefatigable inquiries into the real state of the relations between the body which he represented and the prince at whose court he was resident, Hastings discovered that the title by which the company held the territories recently granted to them by Meer Jaffier, was, in point of fact, good for nothing. He lost no time in communicating the circumstance to his employers, and immediately on the receipt of instructions to that effect, set himself to the task of rectifying the error. Such a task could not be accomplished without some difficulty, but accomplished it ultimately was; for Mr. Has-

tings ceased not to importune the durbar on the subject, and had the satisfaction of transmitting to Fort William a new deed, which, instead of rendering the Company's tenure of the twenty-four pergunnahs dependent on the caprice of each successive nabob, gave to them the sovereignty over the district both then and for ever.

It would be a tedious tale to tell were I to relate how Hastings was harassed and annoyed all this while by the intrigues of the natives with whom he came in contact, whether they represented the interests of the nabob, or acted as collectors of the revenues of different zemindaries under the Company. The atmosphere in which the Asiatics seem alone to live is one of chicanery, and it rarely happens, even to this day, that an European can pretend, till after long and patient study of their character, to follow them through the labyrinth into which they are continually diverging. But the opportunities of twisting and turning, as well as the inducements to take advantage of such opportunities, are in these days comparatively few, whereas at the period of which I am now speaking they were without number. Thus I find Mr. Hastings called upon at one moment to counteract the devices of the nabob's agent, who endeavours to appropriate to his master's use revenues that had been granted to the Company. At another a native in the Company's service pushes himself, as it

were, into Mr. Hastings's province, and succeeds, very much to the chagrin of the latter, in getting his schemes sanctioned by the council at Fort William. Then we have rival gomastahs—some whom the factory at Cossimbazar had nominated, others who profess to act by authority of Clive—squabbling at different stations and impeding the progress of the public service, because each is anxious to appropriate to himself the profits of agency and commission on the goods manufactured. And when we go farther, we see the Nabob at variance with his finance minister; the Nabob's son building up a party of his own; governors of provinces on the eve of revolt, because they either are or believe themselves to be marked out for destruction; and the very troops in open mutiny from time to time, because their pay is always in arrear. I will not, however, attempt to go into a detail of matters in themselves neither interesting nor instructive, but content myself with transcribing so much of Mr. Hastings's correspondence during their progress as may throw some light upon the general nature of his position and the frame of mind with which he set himself to meet and overcome its difficulties.

The following, which is dated Moraudbaug, 12th of August, 1758, explains the circumstances under which Hastings emerged from the obscurity of an export and warehouse keeper at Cossim-

bazar. It is addressed to the Honourable Robert Clive, Esq., president and governor of Fort William:—

Honourable Sir,—Mr. Watts acquainted me when he was at this place, that he had orders from the Board at Calcutta, to appoint me the resident for the Company at Moraudbaug, in the room of Mr. Scrafton, who has accordingly delivered over the management of the affairs at this place to my charge. I have already been introduced by Mr. Watts to the Nabob and the principal persons of this city, but as this is very insufficient to give me that credit and influence which a person in this station ought to be invested with, I request the favour of you, Sir, to give me letters to the Nabob and Chuta* nabob, recommending me strongly to their notice as a person appointed by your direction, and the Company's agent at this place for the management of all affairs at the Durbar. The same introduction, I think, would be necessary to the Seats and Roy Doolub, whenever he may return.

The Nabob being now on his way to Calcutta, should it meet with your approval, it would be of signal service to me were you to mention me to him as a person in whom you have a confidence, and recommend me to him in that light. I need not mention to you, Sir, how necessary it will be to give me some consequence on my first introduction to an employ of such importance, as on this my success in it will in a great measure entirely depend; which consideration, I hope, will excuse my giving you this trouble.

As I look upon myself to be indebted principally to you for my being allotted to this office, of whatsoever advantage it may prove to me with respect to my own private interest, I think it incumbent on me to make

* Young nabob—that is, the nabob's son.

my sincere acknowledgments to you for your favourable intentions herein, which I cannot do better than by a constant attention to the business intrusted to my charge, and my earnest endeavours to promote the interest of the Company as far as my capacity will enable me, in which I hope I shall have the good fortune to meet with your approbation.

There are certain references in this letter to men and things, and more will occur hereafter, which seem to require explanation. Mr. Hastings speaks of the Nabob as on his way to Calcutta, and requests letters of introduction to the Seats and Roy Doolub whenever he shall return. The Seats, as perhaps it is unnecessary to explain, were wealthy Hindoo bankers, of whom Roy Doolub was the chief. But Roy Doolub was more than a banker. He had held office under both Alaverdi Cawn and Suraj ud Dowlah as dewan or principal minister of finance, and had been largely instrumental in accomplishing the revolution which placed Meer Jaffier on the throne of Bengal. Yet the latter no sooner found himself secure on his seat than he began to exhibit an unfriendly disposition towards his dewan. The truth, indeed, is, that Meer Jaffier was not slow in discovering that he had promised a great deal more as the price of his elevation than the exhausted state of the provinces would enable him honestly to make good. The money at his disposal was soon paid away, his jewels and plate were in like manner disposed of, the revenues were antici-

pated in many quarters, and still he was in arrear. Under these circumstances, he began, according to the habits of his race and country, to look with an evil eye upon every person who so much as seemed to be possessed of property, and Roy Doolub, being a very wealthy man, was, among others, marked out for destruction.

It was not the least curious among the many curious pictures which our native alliances at that time presented, that we took not only sovereign princes, but their subjects and servants, under our especial protection. The Company had given the throne of Bengal to Jaffier; yet the Company was under engagements to support Roy Doolub and other Hindoo nobles, such as the governor of Patna, Ramnarrain, against all attempts to deal unjustly towards them, even by the Nabob himself. Now this circumstance, though it withheld the Nabob from open wrong and violence, served also to chafe his pride, and to whet the feeling of rancour which he entertained towards his subordinates. He saw that they looked more to the English than to him; and as he was the first sovereign of Bengal before whom these English had not stood as suppliants, he could not but be conscious that the position which he filled was a degraded one. He began, therefore, to lay plans for the ruin of his own subjects; and when, by the vigilance of the Company's servants, his schemes

were detected and overthrown, the hostility which at first had been directed exclusively against the Hindoos, extended its bitterness to them. Not yet, however, had this disposition displayed itself to a degree, at least, that was calculated to produce anxiety. The downfal and plunder of Roy Doolub was his great object; and it was in the hope of being able to lead Clive into an acquiescence in these views that he made the journey to Calcutta, to which the preceding letter alludes.

Meanwhile Roy Doolub, and his countrymen in general, were not ignorant of the Nabob's intentions respecting them. In the provinces several were strengthening themselves for a contest, and even Roy Doolub had on one occasion been besieged in his house; but Mr. Scrafton, who then resided at the Durbar, interfered, and peace was, at least in appearance, restored. Then was permission obtained for Roy Doolub to accompany his master to Calcutta, and he went accordingly. But though the dewan himself was thus personally safe, he had left to the mercy of the Chuta nabob his wife and daughter, with his brothers, who held office under him, and these he was desirous to remove. The following correspondence I give, not only because in themselves the letters are exceedingly characteristic of the writers, but because they show at once the sort of control under which Hastings acted, and the frankness with which, when he

believed that his superior was in error, he, in no wise refusing to obey, entered his protest against the proposed measure.

From Colonel CLIVE to Mr. HASTINGS.

Calcutta, 20th April, 1758.

Sir,—I have received your favour, and you may be assured of my assistance to increase your influence at the Durbar. I have already told Omud Roy, the new Subah Duan, that you are appointed by me to collect the money at Muxadavad. Moreover, I now inclose you a letter for him, as also one to the Chuta nabob, and to the Seats, to that purpose.

If Roy Doolub's family should apply to you for a guard of sepoys to escort his family down to Calcutta, you will let him have them.

I hope you will soon be able to collect the remainder of the last sixth, for we are in great want of money at present.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
ROBERT CLIVE.

From Mr. HASTINGS to Colonel CLIVE.

Moraudbaug, 24th August, 1758.

Sir,—I have received your favour of the 20th instant, with the inclosed letters for the young Nabob, the Seats and Omud Roy; for which I return you many thanks.

If Roy Doolub's family should apply to me for an escort of sepoys, I shall send them to him, agreeably to your orders. There are some circumstances which oblige me to desire your further directions on this subject, as it may not be in my power to afford them the assistance they may require, at least without occasioning some very bad consequences. The Chuta nabob has

placed hircarrahs in every passage leading to Roy Doolub's house, and one upon each of his boats, to prevent the removal either of his family or effects. He sent me word of it yesterday, with assurances that he had no other intention herein, than to detain Roy Doolub's brothers till they had settled the Khalsa accounts with Omud Roy. The same message, as I have just learned from Ross-beharry, the young Nabob has sent to him.

As the removal of Roy Doolub's family, with all effects and movables belonging to them, is not so easy to be effected, or with the same just pretence, as the departure of Roy Doolub was, you will see the necessity I am under of waiting for your orders before I can well interfere herein, which I therefore request I may be speedily favoured with.

I shall use all means in my power to collect in the remainder of the last sixth, but the absence of the greatest part of the principal Assammees who are gone with the Nabob to Calcutta, has proved a great obstruction to me in this business, and will be till his return.

In the interval between the despatch of his first letter and the receipt of Hastings's answer, Clive wrote again, in consequence of a report having reached him of certain tumults in Moorshedabad, during which one rajah had placed in confinement the son of another. Hastings assures him in return that there was no ground for the report, though he states that Rajah Bullub, the party accused, is a very troublesome person; and then the correspondence concerning Roy Doolub is resumed.

From Colonel CLIVE to Mr. HASTINGS.

Calcutta, 31st August, 1758.

Sir,—I have received your letters of the 24th and 26th August. Your apprehensions of matters coming to extremities in case a guard be sent to bring away Roy Doolub's family are founded in reason. I never intended you should use force, but only furnish them with a party of sepoys to escort them down to Calcutta; you are not acquainted with the connexion between Roy Doolub and the English, and that they are bound not only to protect him, but his family also. You may remonstrate with decency, as often as opportunity offers, that it is unjust to keep the mother and daughter from the father. As for the brothers, it is not worth interfering about them. In short, I would have you to act on all occasions so as to avoid coming to extremities, and at the same time show as much spirit and resolution as will convince the Durbar that we always have it in our power to make ourselves respected.

You must be a little severe in exacting the remainder of the last sixth. It is the nature of these people to do nothing through inclination. Ten sepoys or chokeys, now and then, will greatly expedite the payment of the money.

The adjustment of Roy Doolub's affair was scarcely brought about when different grounds of annoyance presented themselves to Hastings, of which the subjoined letters will show that he neither thought lightly nor considered himself bound to conceal the expression. Clive's answer to the young resident's remonstrance, though abundantly stern, indicates no disposition on the part of the writer to give wanton pain. It is the letter of one who has

taught himself to hold the indulgence of even amiable feeling altogether subordinate to the demands of the public service.

Mr. HASTINGS to Colonel CLIVE.

Moraudbaug, 7th September, 1758.

Sir,—I have been honoured with your favour of the 31st ultimo, and have now the satisfaction to acquaint you that the Nabob has given his permission for the removal of Roy Doolub's family to Calcutta; they wait only for the sealing the Perwannah to depart.

I shall use all possible means for collecting the remainder of the last sixth, and hope very shortly to have gathered in the greatest part; but you must be sensible there is a wide difference between securing the payments due from a large amount, and that of collecting in several small balances remaining on old accounts.

I was greatly surprised at the contents of a letter, which I received two days ago from the Burdwan Rajah, informing me that the Nuncomar had sent peons to him, with orders to pay the revenues to him at Hughley, and to repair immediately to Calcutta in order to settle the monthly payments of his tuncaw for the present year. As there is a considerable balance on the last year's account, and I have received no orders from you to give up the management of the Burdwan affairs to Nuncomar, I doubt not but you will approve of my having sent express injunctions to the Rajah to pay no regard to any orders of that kind till ratified by advices from me, as he may be assured the business entrusted to my charge will not be taken out of my hands without my being previously informed of it by my employers. I have likewise, on this occasion, repeated the orders which I gave the Jemetdar of the sepoys, who are gone with the Rajah, not to suffer him

or his people to be molested by any persons in the collecting their revenues.

Though in this affair I have acted upon the supposition, (and indeed without the least doubt,) that this proceeding of Nuncomar's is entirely without orders, yet I will not pretend to be ignorant that I have sometime since heard, that he was to be appointed collector of the Burdwan and Nuddea tuncaws, and received a letter yesterday from himself, in which he acquaints me that he had received the Killaut from you for that purpose. However, if I am to relinquish all concern in the affairs of those zemindaries, I beg to be favoured with proper orders for that end, that I may have it in my power to quit them with some degree of credit; and not by meeting with opposition in the performance of my duty from other persons appointed to the same service, appear to usurp an office for which I have no authority, or as abruptly dismissed from it for some misconduct or incapacity.

In the mean time I think it incumbent on me to represent to you, that the Burdwan revenues are already six months and a half in arrears, and the most plentiful season now coming on. The Burdwan Rajah, in his letter to me, complains that the demand of Nuncomar has prevented his paying any part of the new kist which he agreed with me, and if he is obliged to go to Calcutta to settle a fresh kistbundee with Nuncomar, it must unavoidably occasion the loss of at least a month more. For this reason I now send you a copy of the kistbundee which I settled with the Burdwan people at their departure from hence, which if you approve of, I recommend it to you to abide by the agreement already made with them, as it will save them a great expense and unnecessary loss of time, and greatly expedite the payment of their revenues. With the above copy, I have likewise transcribed for

your perusal the kistbundee by which the Burdwan rents are annually paid in to the Government, which will the better enable you to judge of that which I have made.

Colonel CLIVE to Mr. HASTINGS.

Calcutta, 10th September, 1758.

Sir,—I have now received your letter of the 7th instant, the contents of which I must confess have surprised me as much as Nuncomar's appointment could you, for I cannot account for your ignorance that Nuncomar was to be appointed collector of the revenues of Burdwan, Nuddea, and Hughley, for the two ensuing years, and that the money collected was to be paid at Hughley. This was agreed upon at Muxadavad when I was there, and before we had thoughts of desiring you to accept the management of the Durbar affairs; and one reason for desiring to have the money paid at Hughley in preference to Muxadavad was to avoid giving the Nabob and the great men about him umbrage in seeing such large sums coming into the public treasury, and then sent out again for the use of the English.

Mr. Watts, who is now present, assures me he informed you of these things; and that you had only to collect about three and a half lacs of rupees, the remainder of the last sixth, and to carry on the Durbar affairs. This I can say, that if Mr. Scrafton did not fully explain to you our intentions of receiving the revenues of the two ensuing years at Hughley, he was wanting in the duties of his office when he delivered over affairs into your hands, for he was well acquainted with them.

I cannot say I think there is any blame due for not making known to you in form what I thought you was fully acquainted with by Messrs. Watts and Scrafton before they left Muxadavad.

That you should attribute taking the management of the tuncaws out of your hands to misconduct or incapacity gives me much concern, for no one will be more ready to support your character and welfare than myself, when it can be done without prejudicing the concerns of the Company. This being the case at present, in the opinion of the council, I am persuaded you will think no slight could be intended you. I desire you will write the Burdwan Rajah to comply with Nuncomar's orders about coming to Calcutta. The kullat was given him in full council without the least thought or design of lessening your credit or authority at the Durbar.

Your news of Roy Doolub's family having liberty to come to Calcutta gives great satisfaction here.

Mr. Hastings's reply to this letter seems to me to be every way worthy of the man. It puts the hardship of his case in a proper light, yet indicates no unwillingness on the part of the writer to postpone his personal feelings and personal credit to what was considered the interest of the Company; and while it shows that in the view which Clive had taken of the matter he was somewhat in error, it affords the best evidence of the perfectly good understanding which subsisted between two men—of all whom British India has produced in their respective walks of life beyond comparison the greatest. It is a long letter, but I do not think that it ought to be withheld.

Mr. Hastings to Colonel Clive.

Moraudbaug, 14th September, 1758.

Sir,—I have been duly honoured with your letter of the 10th instant.

I was not ignorant of the report that Nuncomar was to be appointed collector of the Burdwan and Nuddea revenues, but neither Mr. Watts nor Mr. Scrafton ever gave me the least intimation that such part of their revenues as were included in their accounts of the last sixth, were to be taken out of my hands; the contrary of which was expressly declared by Mr. Scrafton, as will evidently appear from his last letter to the Board, in which he mentions those of Burdwan and Nuddea amongst the other balances which he had left to my charge; therefore it was surely no unreasonable thing in me to imagine that whenever these revenues were to be taken out of my hands, I should be previously ordered to resign them, till when it was my duty to oppose every person that interfered with me in my business.

All the instructions which I received relating to my office were from Mr. Scrafton, and to this purpose: that I was to collect the remainder of the last sixth which amounted to about eleven lacs of rupees, and wait the orders of the Board with regard to the Burdwan and Nuddea tuncaws for the year. For the further explication of the different parts of my business he left me his letters and all his papers, agreeably to which I have acted all along. As there was a balance of near four lacs due from Burdwan on the old tuncaw, the payment of which it was my business to settle before they left the city, I thought I could not do it more properly than by adding that amount to that of the tuncaw for the present year, and settle the payments of the whole together, which method I observed Mr. Scrafton had taken with the Nuddea revenues; and this appeared more properly my duty then, both as five months of the Burdwan accounts for this year were already elapsed, and as the apprehensions they were under from the government and the

need they stood in of my protection, gave me a fair opportunity of finishing their kistbundee more expeditiously and more for the advantage of the Company, than I could have done at another time. My conduct in this affair the reasons I have given will, I hope, sufficiently justify. And indeed I must confess I ascribed some degree of merit to myself in having so happily concluded an affair which had been so long a time depending; nor does it give me small concern to find, that you disapprove of that agreement.

I have wrote, in obedience to your orders, to the Burdwan Rajah, to advise him that I have no longer any business in the collection of his revenues, for all particulars relating to which he is to obey Nuncomar's orders. The same orders I shall likewise send to the Nuddea Sazoul, though it may not, perhaps, be quite so requisite, as I am informed he has already, without waiting for any advices from me, sent away 83,000 rupees of the Nuddea tuncaw to Hughley.

As I know not whether any part of the remaining balances belong to the Hughley accounts, I am entirely at a loss how to proceed with them, being apprehensive of meeting with a fresh mortification in case I should again meddle with any of the zemindars of Nuncomar's jurisdiction. I shall therefore be much obliged to you if you will favour me with your instructions on this point.

It would ill become me to object against any measures which have had the sanction of yours and the Council's approbation. I shall, therefore, cheerfully apply myself to the small part of the business which still remains upon my hands, of which I hope very shortly to have acquitted myself.

I am sorry to find you have misinterpreted one passage in my letter, which I must beg leave to rectify. I never had the least suspicion that the transferring

of the Burdwan and Nuddea affairs to Hughley proceeded in the least from any ill opinion of my conduct or capacity, but that it would be construed as such by every body here, as it was universally believed that I was appointed at Moraudbaug principally for the collection of those revenues. But I must beg leave to declare that the confidence which I place in the promises which you have made me, and suffer me to add, the expressions which I am told you have done me the honour to make use of in my favour, are sufficient to prevent my entertaining the least thought that you intended me any slight or prejudice on this occasion.

Since writing the above, a complaint has been made to me, that Nuncomar has put peons on the Mysoddul gomastah at Hughley, upon account of 86,388, the balance of the Mysoddul account, which has been lately paid to me at Moraudbaug; insisting on the gomastah's paying him that amount, as belonging to the Hughley accounts, with the charge of which he is invested. I must suppress what I feel from these daily indignities; but surely, Sir, I may at least conclude that this proceeding is without your authority, otherwise it will be impossible for me to know what accounts still remain in my charge; and I am sure, Sir, it was never your intention, in placing me at Moraudbaug, that I should only hold the business for Nuncomar, till he was properly settled and at leisure to take it out of my hands.

This unpleasant affair was yet upon Hastings's mind, when there occurred an event which was well calculated to alarm him—not on his own account, but on account of his employers, whose interests required that tranquillity should be strictly preserved in every part of the Nabob's dominions.

It is worth while to give my account of that movement in the words of these illustrious correspondents, because the letters of both are remarkable; and that of Clive, which bears on the most delicate part of the subject, is a perfect lesson in the philosophy of the Asiatic mind, which was not wasted upon him who received it. On the 15th of September Mr. Hastings writes as follows:—

Sir,—I write this expressly to inform you that the Nabob's forces have surrounded him for their pay. It is reported, and I believe with truth, that an attempt was intended two nights ago against his life, but rendered ineffectual, the Nabob having received timely notice of it. I hope there is no danger. Upon the first report which I heard of this disturbance I sent the Vakeel to the Nabob to be informed of the truth. He has confirmed the above particulars, and has wrote to you about them, desiring me likewise to acquaint you with this affair. The Vakeel is this instant returned. I shall go myself to the Nabob in the morning.

This hurried note was followed by a second, which is without date, but runs thus:—

Sir,—I informed you in a letter of the 15th instant of the danger which lately threatened the Nabob; the following particulars I have learned since from the Nabob's own mouth, and am desired by him to transmit them for your information.

On the 9th night of the Mohurrum (August 13th our style) the Nabob went from his palace by water to the Chuta nabob's, attended only by a few menial

servants. In the way he observed the shore and all the gauts between his house and the Chuta nabob's covered with vast shoals of people. After a short stay at the Chuta nabob's he returned in his palankeen to the Imambarree, which he found surrounded and filled with sepoys who were gathered together in a very tumultuous and disorderly manner. As he had appointed Coja Huddee to place proper guards about the Imambarree, and relied entirely upon his care to prevent any disorders, the Nabob still entertained no suspicion of any danger, till one of his hircarrahs (upon his arrival at the Imambarree) came to him and told him that Coja Huddee had armed all his people, who seemed to threaten some disturbance. Upon this information he gave orders to those of his own people who by this time were assembled about him, to turn the crowd out of the Imambarree, and planted guards at the different avenues to prevent any insurrection. Shokum Sing, and the other jemetdars belonging to Coja Huddee, who were sitting in the Imambarree, seeing their plot discovered, immediately rose up and hastily went away.

In the morning Bahader-beg, a duffadar of Rohum Cawn's forces, came to the Nabob and acquainted him that he had had a very miraculous escape, for that Coja Huddee had armed and assembled the other jemetdars and sepoys, on purpose to take away his life. Presently after Shokum Sing and Harroon Cawn (formerly of Roy Doolub's Rissalla) came in and discovered to him the whole affair, acquainting him that Roy Doolub had sent Coja Huddee a bill of exchange to Meer Allee, for two lac of rupees, to be distributed amongst the sepoys, that under pretence of demanding the arrears of their pay, they might surround and cut off the Nabob. In consequence of this discovery the Nabob has dismissed Coja Huddee from his service,

and appointed Mahumder Cawn (a patan) the buxey of his forces in the room of the former, whom he has likewise ordered to leave the city.

This is the purport of what I can recollect of the Nabob's discourse. If I have omitted any circumstance, you will have it, I imagine, from the Nabob himself, as he mentioned that he should write to you about it. He is greatly exasperated against Roy Doolub, whom he looks upon as the author of all this confusion.

In addition to these letters, Hastings wrote again on the 22nd, and inclosed a translation of the Nabob's florid epistle, in which all his grievances were set forth. It is not worth while to transcribe these, more especially as Clive's reply to the communications of an earlier date seems to have set the question of Roy Doolub's guilt or innocence at rest for ever.

Colonel Clive to Mr. Hastings.

Calcutta, 6th October, 1758.

Sir,—I have received your letter of the 9th, the contents of which were of such a nature that I could not dispense with making them known to the Committee, reserving that part which related to Watts and Scrafton.

You have not yet been long enough at the Durbar to make yourself acquainted with the dark designs of the Mussulmans. The moment I perused your letter I could perceive a design in the Nabob and those about him against Roy Doolub, and you may be assured what is alleged against him and his letters to Coja Huddee is a forgery from beginning to end. Roy Doolub is not such a fool as to give anything under his own hand. His cautious behaviour previous to the

affair of Placis is a convincing proof of it; besides, let his inclinations be what they will, he knows my attachment to the Nabob to be so firmly fixed, that he would never dare to intrigue against him, well knowing that his life and fortune are in my power. How easy is it to counterfeit hands and seals in this country! and the Moors in general are villains enough to undertake any thing which may benefit themselves at another's expense. In short, the whole of the scheme is to exasperate me so much against Roy Doolub that the Nabob may have the plucking of him of all his money. The withdrawing our protection from a man to whom it has been once promised would entail disgrace and infamy upon the English nation.

I cannot avoid entertaining the strongest resentment against the Nabob, if what you write about Coja Huddee be true. The man who dared to accuse me of entering into schemes of assassination ought to have been punished upon the spot. After the treatment he received at Calcutta, he must have known that the English are endued with sentiments of honour and conscience, which the Moors are utter strangers to; and I must desire you will inform him that if he give ear to such things as these, there will soon be an end to all confidence and friendship between us.

Such were Clive's views of this pretended conspiracy, and such the grounds on which he rested them. They were adopted at once by Hastings, and the event proved, that in every point of view they were correct. No plan at all had ever been formed by Roy Doolub to take away the Nabob's life; nor did his sepoys, by tumultuously assembling, aim at any thing more than the payment of the

arrears which were due to them. So the matter being lightly dealt with, both at Moorshedabad and Calcutta, men soon ceased to notice it in their talk, and Roy Doolub continued to enjoy the protection of the English.

The next letter which seems to me to demand transcription is that which relates to the defect in the title by which the Company held their lands in and around Calcutta. It bears date 27th of September, 1758, and is addressed, as usual, to the Hon. Robert Clive, Esq., President and Governor, &c. in Council of Fort William.

'Honourable Sir and Sirs,—My last address to your honours was of the 25th instant, in which I inclosed a copy of the government's demands on the Honourable Company, for the revenues of the pergunnah of Moodagolcha, and I now take the liberty of informing your honours that I have lately discovered what I conceive to be a great defect in the Company's present title to the new lands granted them by the late treaty with the Nabob. I understand that those lands are at present held only by virtue of the Nabob's perwannah; but no sunnud has yet been granted for them, nor have they been duly entered in the conongou books as the zemindarree of the Company, being stated therein the mudaukhelut of (or lands possessed by) the English Company, as you will observe in the account inclosed in my last, in which they are so named, that being a copy of the conongou books.

This distinction, perhaps, may appear trivial, but may hereafter prove a subject of great contention if proper measures are not taken to prevent it in time. The Nabob's perwannah will, I doubt not, be of suffi-

cient validity during his life, but can be of no force with his successors if they choose to dispute it

I do not apprehend that there can be any difficulty in obtaining a sunnud for the zemindarree of the Honourable Company's lands, though it may not be so easily effected if too long deferred, as it may then look like a new demand, and will be most probably called such, especially if we should lose any part of our present influence with the government.

I hope I shall not need any excuse for troubling your honours on this subject, as it is my duty to lay before you every thing that comes to my knowledge, by which the Company's interest may be any way affected, though it may not immediately concern my particular employ. Your honours will please to make such inquiry into this affair as you may judge it deserves. Should you think proper to lay any commands upon me concerning this matter, I shall not be wanting in my endeavours to execute them in the best manner I am able for the Honourable Company's advantage.

The preceding communication was received as it deserved by the governor in council, and Mr. Hastings was desired to exercise his own discretion as to the best and speediest method of having the defect in the Company's title made good. Accordingly, on the 20th of November, he writes again as follows, after having been nearly two months negociating for the requisite sunnud.

To the Hon. ROBERT CLIVE, President and Governor, &c., Select Committee.

Honourable Sir and Sirs,—By orders from the president, I have paid the Nabob a lac of rupees on ac-

count of the Calcutta lands. A few days ago the Nabob desired that another lac might be paid him on the same account, and intimated a request that the Company would advance him two lac besides, which he would repay with the customary interest. His first demand being but reasonable, and it being of the utmost consequence, just at this juncture, to keep upon the best terms with the Nabob, I immediately agreed to the payment of the sum required, and have accordingly paid him another lac of rupees, which I hope your honours will approve of. By the inclosed account, your honours will observe, that after the deduction of the sums above-mentioned, there still remains a balance due from the Company to the Nabob.

In case the Nabob should again mention anything concerning the proposal of borrowing two hundred thousand rupees of the Honourable Company, I shall be glad to be favoured with your orders in what manner I shall answer him. I must take the liberty to observe, that the Nabob's wants are to all appearance very pressing, and it would not a little contribute towards the success of the [illegible] now on foot at the Durbar, to gratify him in this point.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that the greatest difficulties in the settlement of the Company's lands are happily surmounted. The lands without the line, extending as far as Bangenbazar, are allowed the Company. This point having been some time since settled with Royroyan, without any application to the Nabob, there remains only to get a perwannah for the possession of Annoorpoor, and to settle the accounts of Ballia Bussendree. The latter will be concluded in a very few days, the former the Nabob has already given his consent to, and has ordered the Royroyan to deliver to him a draft of that country, with an account of the revenues arising from it. These points settled,

I hope the sunnud will be drawn out and executed without any further impediment The other claims made by your honours, relating to the seway and other arbitrary taxes imposed on the zemindars by the government, not being included in the sunnud, are left to be adjusted with the Nabob after the sunnud is obtained, which being of the greatest consequence to the Honourable Company, and what only can render the title to their lands valid according to the laws of the country, the other articles may be safely disputed when this is once secured, but would only serve to cause dangerous delay were they to be too soon introduced. Your honours will observe, that the seway, chout, &c. are, for the above-mentioned cause, included.

The governor and council were very grateful to Mr. Hastings for the discovery which he had made, and very urgent with him to bring the negotiation to a favourable issue; but the idea of lending money to the Nabob of Bengal was by no means congenial to their feelings. Accordingly, Clive replies, on the 28th of November, in the following terms:—

Sir,—Your letter of the 25th I received this morning. For that part of it which relates to the Calcutta lands I must refer you to another opportunity.

Yours to the Committee about the loan of a sum of money to the Nabob has been laid before the Council, being a matter which more particularly comes under their cognizance, and requires some consideration. However, I cannot think that he is in that distress for want of money which you represent. To my certain knowledge he is in possession of gold to the amount of

several lacs of rupees, and if you were to hint to him, whenever he pleads poverty, that you are not ignorant of his hidden resources, I believe it might put an end to the disagreeable topic of borrowing money.

I cannot think Nuncomar deserving of the Nabob's resentment, without it be for his known attachment to the English, of which I am fully convinced. The Burdwan revenues are little or nothing behind hand: the tuncaws on the other lands he has nothing to do with. The true cause of the Nabob's hatred to Nuncomar proceeds from his not joining with Omer Beg in Roy Doolub's ruin and overthrow. Nuncomar has now, under the Nabob's own hand, offers of a title and jaggeer if he would bring the affair of Roy Doolub's letter to a good issue. By this you will judge what the Nabob is about. You may lay it down as a maxim, that the Mussulmans will never be influenced by kind treatment to do us justice; their own apprehensions only can and will induce them to fulfil their agreements. The present situation of our affairs requires our being more compliant than would be consistent with the interest of the Company at any other time.

From the preceding correspondence, some idea may be formed as to the nature of the more important affairs, the management of which devolved upon Mr. Hastings during the earlier portion of his residence at the court of Meer Jaffier. Mixed up as they were with many and complicated questions relative to the finance, and revenue, and trade of the country, they proved no bad materials wherewith to discipline to habits of business the mind of the future governor of India, while the success with which he conducted them was not more conducive

to his own personal credit, than satisfactory to those under whom he acted. "I am very sensible," Clive writes, some time subsequently to his letter of the 28th of November, "of the pains you have taken, and shall not fail acquainting the Company by the first opportunity, how much you have contributed to bring that important matter to so happy an issue." Such praise coming from such a quarter could not fail of proving eminently gratifying to its object; neither was it barren of results, for to his management of this business Hastings was always accustomed to look back, as to the first decided step which circumstances enabled him to take on the road to eminence.

CHAPTER V.

Clive resigns the Government—Succeeded by Mr. Holwell and Mr. Vansittart—New Revolution, and appointment of Cosseim Ali as Nabob—Mr. Vansittart an object of jealousy to his Council, and is in the minority—Mr. Hastings a Member of Council—His negotiations with the Nabob—Violences on all sides—Rupture—Deposition of Meer Cosseim—Mr. Hastings returns to England.

It will be seen from the contents of the preceding chapter, that even under the superintendence of such a man as Clive, the affairs of India were, at this juncture, exceedingly hard to manage. The state of the Nabob's mind, not less than of his finances, was altogether unfavourable to order. He was at enmity with most of the leading men in the provinces; he was irritable, uneasy, chafed, and thoroughly discontented. His title, though at one time recognized at Delhi, was now again called in question; while of the English, on whose support the very existence of his government depended, he entertained a boundless jealousy. Clive alone appears to have commanded both his respect and his confidence, for Clive's was a master spirit which caused its superiority to be felt and acknowledged by all who came within the reach of its influence. Yet even Clive found, from time to time, that the task of managing and controlling elements so discordant was a difficult one. It was hardly to be expected that his successor in

office, be he whom he might, would succeed him also in his rare talent for command; and certainly the lot fell, at all events for a season, on one who was as little qualified as can well be imagined for the duties that were imposed upon him.

On the 25th of February, 1760, Clive sailed for England, leaving the temporary care of the government to Mr. Holwell, by whom it was to be handed over, so soon as he should arrive from Madras, to Mr. Vansittart. There is no denying that the difficulties which encountered Mr. Holwell at the outset were very great. The Shazada, Ali Gowher, the Mogul's eldest son, had again entered Bahar, and was busily employed collecting forces and raising contributions. Tikarra, the capital of the zemindarree of Gya, was his residence. His principal supporter was Camgar Cawn Alli, the Rajah of Herswa, whilst many of the jemetdars, and other military chiefs whom Meer Jaffier had dismissed, enlisted under his banner, and swelled his numbers. Moreover there was, on the part of Ramnarrain, the deputy or governor of Patna, a very culpable degree of negligence, if, indeed, no graver charge might be brought against him; for he took no pains to watch the movements of his own jematdars, not a few of whom were known to be disaffected. And finally, advices being received of the assassination of Alemgeer, the Shazada caused himself to be pro-

claimed Emperor by the title of Shah Allum, appointing, at the same time, Sujah ud Dowlah the Nabob of Oude, to be his vizier, and sending summonses into all the provinces, to require that his authority should be acknowledged. Now though the power of the Mogul had long virtually ceased, there was a charm in the name which still went for something, more especially in cases where, like the present, men were looking round for a legitimate excuse to rebel. Not in Bahar, therefore, alone, but everywhere else, the young Emperor found many friends who gathered round him, not more out of respect for the ancient title which he had assumed, than because the yoke of Meer Jaffier sat heavy on their shoulders.

While such was the threatening aspect of affairs on one side, in other quarters dangers and grounds of embarrassment were not far to seek. Cauder Hossein Cawn, the Naib or Deputy of Purneah, assumed an attitude which was well calculated to create uneasiness. During the two years which he had held office, he had devoted all his energies to the accumulation of a treasure, and the organization of an army, and he now lay upon one of the branches of the Ganges, at the head of 10,000 good troops, without declaring either for Meer Jaffier or the Emperor. The Mahrattas, too, were moving upon Cuttack, of which the revenues had, in Alaverdi Cawn's time, been assigned to them; and

the Dutch, by whom Jaffier's title had never been recognised, evinced symptoms of hostility. The province of Bengal alone wore somewhat of a peaceable appearance. The war was not yet sufficiently ripe to break out so near to the metropolis: yet even there many powerful individuals were suspected, whom it would be necessary to watch, and, on the first appearance of discontent, to put down.

If there had existed between Meer Jaffier and the Government at Fort William the same good understanding which used to exist,—in other words, had Mr. Holwell possessed, like his predecessor, such temper and firmness as the exigencies of the moment required, it is not impossible but that the clouds which obscured the political horizon might all have been dispersed by a process less violent than that which was adopted. But Mr. Holwell had neither temper nor firmness; he appears to have regarded the Nabob all along with an eye of extreme disfavour. His errors, and he committed many, were all exaggerated; his embarrassments, and they were abundant too, were all undervalued. No attempt was made to lead him into the right way; and his very frailties of temper were treated as offences against the dignity of the English name. His poverty, likewise, which was extreme, was treated as a crime. The subsidies which he had promised were in arrear,

and no excuse for their non-payment would be accepted. In a word, there was a prejudice against him on the part of Mr. Holwell, which soon excited a similar prejudice in him against both Mr. Holwell and his colleagues, of which the results were, after much intriguing on both sides, absolute ruin to the one party, and anything but an accession of honourable fame to the other.

With the detail of the military operations which went forward from the beginning of December, 1759, to the month of July, 1760, I have here very little concern. They were not, in any respect, controlled or directed by Mr. Hastings, whose position all the while was at the court of Meer Jaffier, where the confused state both of the Nabob's and the Company's accounts found him ample employment. Neither do I think that any good purpose would be served, were I to plunge myself and my reader into the troubled waters of fiscal detail and complicated accounts. Enough is done when I state that the Nabob was in every way the Company's debtor; that independently of the arrears of subsidy that were due, he had borrowed money at Calcutta, which, the treasury there being wholly exhausted, the authorities were urgent to have repaid; and that Mr. Hastings, finding how impossible it is to draw water from the rock, was glad to accept, in lieu of the ready cash, a tuncaw or bond over the revenues of Burd-

wan and Kistnagur. Even this assignment, however, was of no avail either to relieve the English, or to set the Nabob right in the eyes of his patrons. Whatever misfortune befel, whatever embarrassment arose, was attributed by Mr. Holwell to the deliberate malice of Meer Jaffier, while Meer Jaffier regarded Mr. Holwell as his sworn enemy, whom it would be fair to overreach, and commendable to thwart, by every means in his power.

In spite of the ill-disguised hostility of the two Governments, the war was carried on with as much of vigour as the impoverished state of their finances would allow. The young Emperor, though successful in his first effort against Ramnarrain, sustained a severe defeat from the combined armies of Colonel Caillaud and Meeram, the Chuta Nabob; and after an ineffectual attempt to surprise Moorshedabad, and a second repulse before Patna, was compelled to retreat into Hindoostan. Captain Knox, a brave and skilful officer, overthrew the rebel Rajah of Purneah with great slaughter; while the Mahrattas were held in check, and the Dutch pacified, by Meer Cosseim Ali, the Nabob's son-in-law, and the handful of Europeans that supported him. Nevertheless, an event befel, in the midst of these successes, which produced some uneasiness at the moment, and proved, in due time, the proximate cause of a new revolution in Bengal. I allude to the death of

the Nabob's son, Meeram, who, though a violent and cruel man, had been the main support of his father's throne; partly because of the absolute submission of his will to that of Clive, partly because his reckless generosity acquired for him the attachment of the army. While marching, with Colonel Caillaud, in pursuit of Hossein Cawn, his tent was struck with lightning, and he himself, being asleep at the moment,—for the storm occurred during the night,—was killed on the spot.

Though the good management of Caillaud hindered the army in the field from revolting, it was impossible under the circumstances to continue the campaign; so he retraced his steps to Patna, and there went into quarters. At Moorshedabad, a different result ensued. The armed rabble, which represented an army there, were no sooner informed of Meeram's death, than they surrounded the palace in a threatening manner and demanded their arrears of pay. Finally, as if to complete the sum of evils, the Mahrattas broke in, and the last bond of order in the provinces was broken.

It was amid scenes of war, and mutiny, and plunder, like these, that Mr. Vansittart assumed the government of Bengal. Owing his elevation entirely to Clive's recommendation, there is no reason to doubt that he was well disposed to pursue the course of policy which Clive had marked

out. But however easy it may be for a man of moderate talent to follow genius in a smooth and beaten track, his capability of doing so ceases so soon as the road becomes indistinct and rugged, and a deviation, be it ever so slight, inevitably leads to the widest separation from him who preceded. This was precisely the case with Mr. Vansittart. With a clear perception of the difference between right and wrong in the abstract, his powers of mind were not adequate to the task of rightly directing him in action; indeed his letters and minutes drawn up soon after he took his seat at the Council Board show that he was quite incompetent to take a comprehensive view of the great and conflicting interests committed to his charge, and still less able to quell the violent passions that were in action. His estimate of the Nabob's character appears to have been formed from the representations made to him by Mr. Holwell. He believed him to be not only unable but unwilling to act uprightly; and the whole bent of his policy was directed to one end, namely, the erection of such an influence within the Durbar itself, as should force upon the Nabob attention to duties which, except by compulsion, he would never be brought to perform.

The power of the sword is in every state of society very great; in the East it is, and always was, supreme. Meer Jaffier himself owed his

elevation mainly to the facilities of successful revolt which his position as commander-in-chief had afforded him, while Meeram his son, for the self-same reason, had been all powerful under his father. It became therefore a point of the first importance to get the authority which Meeram had wielded transferred to some one who should both enjoy the confidence of the English, and possess talent enough to administer the affairs of the Souhbadary aright. Now there were two candidates for this honour, Meer Cosseim Ali Cawn, and Maharajah Raje-bullub, the former the Nabob's son-in-law, and the husband of his only legitimate daughter; the latter, a dewan, or principal officer of revenue under the deceased Meeram, to whom the guardianship of the Nabob's two illegitimate grandsons was committed. Moreover, another question was involved in that of the command of the army, for the right of succession to the musnud itself was disputed, Raje-bullub claiming it for the elder of his two wards, and Cosseim Ali Cawn asserting that he, by virtue of his wife, was the legitimate heir. It is not worth while to explain at length the means which the rival claimants adopted to accomplish their respective ends. Raje-bullub found supporters in Colonel Caillaud and Mr. Amyatt; Cosseim Ali Cawn was favoured by Mr. Holwell and the select committee; and on this as on every other question,

Mr. Holwell, with the reins of government, made over his own views of things to Mr. Vansittart. I do not, however, mean to insinuate, that in this case Mr. Holwell's views were incorrect. If there had been any rule of legitimacy by which Indian successions could be regulated, Cosseim Ali was the unquestionable heir; and what was more to the purpose,—besides that he was in the very vigour of life—his attachment to the English was undoubted. But Mr. Vansittart had no business to press the matter with so high a hand as that which his prejudices led him to employ. It might be prudent, and even proper, to exercise his influence for the purpose of obtaining for his protégé the honours which he sought; but he had no right to force upon the Nabob a commander-in-chief and successor, under circumstances which deprived the Nabob of all except the shadow of authority in the state. Such, however, was the course which, within two months after his arrival at Fort William, the new governor judged it expedient to follow. Cosseim Ali Cawn, making a journey to Calcutta, entered into a treaty with the authorities there, by which, binding himself to pay off all outstanding arrears, and to make over to the English certain large tracts of country, he received from them in return assurance of such support as should render him virtually master, where he affected only to take rank as servant.

In the judgment at which Mr. Holwell arrived, touching the superior nature of Cosseim Ali's claims over those of Raje-bullub, Mr. Hastings heartily concurred. There is now lying before me a letter addressed by him to Mr. Vansittart, and the members of the select committee, in which he argues at length in favour of the Nabob's son-in-law, and which I abstain from inserting only because it refers to subjects of which the interest has long since died away. But I do not find that he was an advocate for the very violent measures which were adopted. His reasonings all apply to the disputed point of succession, and to the wisdom of assigning the power of the sword where it was not likely to be abused; he seems never to have contemplated the possibility of Meer Jaffier's deposition, and the raising of his son-in-law to the throne. It is very true that his opinion of Meer Jaffier's talents for business was low; and that here, as well as elsewhere, he expresses a strong conviction, that something more than remonstrance must be used, if any hope of restoring order to the affairs of the Souhbadary were entertained. "I have too frequently had occasion," he observes, "to bewail the opportunities which have been lost of putting a final stop to the troubles which have so long distressed these provinces, by the indolence and irresolution of the two nabobs, and the knavery and intrigues of

their ministers. The revenues of their country have been dissipated in idle schemes of luxury and ill-timed vanity; mis-spent on useless alliances, and so scantily and injudiciously employed in the expenses of the war, that the sepoys are starving and dissatisfied with the service, the country left a prey to every invader, and the enemy, after continual losses and repeated disappointments, more powerful than ever. I need not observe how small a part of the province of Bahar is in the Nabob's possession. In this the Rajah of Beerboom has publicly thrown off his allegiance, and his example will most probably be soon followed by the defection of the other zemindars on the borders of the province. Private intrigues have been forming at the city; and, in a word, we may expect at the opening of the next campaign to see the whole country become a scene of war. The earliest and most vigorous measures are therefore required to obviate the impending dangers. There now remain but two months for the conclusion of the rains, and this time, which should be employed in settling the operations of the ensuing campaign, will, unless prevented by your timely interposition, be fruitlessly wasted in deliberating who shall fill the place of the late commander. Whether, therefore, Cosseim Ali Cawn or Raje-bullub be the man destined for this station, permit me to say it is necessary your honours'

declaration in favour of the one or the other should immediately determine this contention."

This is strong language, doubtless, and coming from one whose opportunities of observation were as abundant as his powers of observing correctly were indisputable, it goes some way towards justifying the extreme step which soon afterwards was taken. But I cannot see that the step itself is either hinted at or approved. Mr. Hastings, the resident at the Durbar, is, simply in the discharge of a great duty, setting forth the state of disorder into which all departments of the government were thrown, and recommending to his superiors the adoption of such measures as seem best suited to avert the evils with which both they and their ally were threatened.

The progress of Mr. Vansittart to Moorshedabad, his interview with Meer Jaffier, and the consequences arising out of it, are all matters of history. It stands upon record, likewise, that throughout the whole of the transactions which led to the deposition of one nabob and the setting up of another Mr. Hastings played an active part: yet Mr. Hastings, like Mr. Lushington, was nothing more than an instrument in the hands of his superior, whose orders it was his duty to obey without remonstrance. At the same time it would be an act of injustice towards all parties to conceal, that the revolution having been once effected

Mr. Hastings expressed his hearty approval of it. As has been already shown, he thought meanly of Meer Jaffier's abilities, and reposed very little confidence in his integrity; and hence, though he might have hesitated, if in authority, to set him absolutely aside, he did not feel that, as a subordinate, he had any thing to do, except to support, as far as his means extended, the policy of his superiors. It would have been well for Mr. Vansittart, and, indeed, for the credit of the English name in India, if a like spirit had actuated others whose opportunities of doing both good and evil were more extended than those of Hastings.

Sir John Malcolm, in his life of the great Lord Clive, has said, "there is no page in our Indian history so revolting as the four years of the weak and inefficient rule of Mr. Vansittart." This is perfectly just, even when the grand results of what may be called public measures are looked to. It is a thousand times more just when we come to examine as well the motives by which individuals were actuated, as the tone of their personal bearing one towards another. To the Council, with which he was expected to act, Mr. Vansittart was from the outset an object of jealousy, if on no other grounds, for the obvious reason that he had been brought in over the heads of the persons composing it from another presidency. To individual members of the Council he gave great offence, now

by the little attention which he seemed to pay to their suggestions, now by the preference which in the distribution of patronage he gave to one over another. But the circumstance which most of all excited a feeling of unmitigated hostility towards him was, that such a thing as a revolution,—the dethroning of one nabob, and the establishment of another, should have been managed, not by the Council collectively, but by the portion of it which made up the select committee. Men were not forgetful of the enormous fortunes which a former revolution had secured to individuals; and they were very little disposed to sit down quietly under the idea, that of their fair share in the spoil they had been deprived. Accordingly, the change was scarcely effected, and affairs put, as was believed, on a sound footing, ere protests were entered in the minute book against the entire series of transactions; which, if they served no other purpose, opened the door to bickerings and strife, amid the din of which not the public interests alone, but all the respect due from one man to another, seemed to have been forgotten.

The first year of the new Nabob's reign was marked by many and important successes in the field. With the assistance of an English detachment under Major Yorke he put down the rebellion of the chiefs of Beerboom and Burdwan; while Major Carnac triumphed completely over

the emperor and M. Law. Had the mind of Clive been present to turn these advantages to account, the most beneficial results would have accrued to all parties. The Nabob's throne was undeniably rendered secure by them; and there needed only the exercise of firmness, discretion, and good faith on both sides to place his relations with the Company upon a just footing. But while the English Government was wanting in the moral energy without which it is impossible to give the law, except by violence, even to a dependent, the Nabob thought only of confirming his own power, with a view, as has been broadly asserted, of sooner or later shaking off the yoke. "It was impossible," says Mr. Verelst, "that Meer Cosseim should rest the foundation of his government upon our support. Self-defence taught him to look for it in independence, and he sought it in the blood of all who enjoyed the English protection." It is not quite certain that any device of the kind had as yet matured itself in the mind of Meer Cosseim; but the circumstance is by no means improbable; and a little more experience of the tempers of those with whom he had to deal could hardly fail of confirming him in the bold determination.

Meer Cosseim had offered an enormous price for his elevation to the throne; he soon found that the exercise of economy, even on the most rigid scale, would not enable him to pay the debt. He there-

fore began to inquire narrowly into the manner in which his deputies administered the affairs of their respective provinces; and of these, there was one, Ramnarrain, the chief of Patna, whom he early marked out as his victim; partly because he believed that a large booty would accrue to him from the plunder of the Hindoo; partly because Ramnarrain was suspected, whether justly or not, of a disposition to intrigue against him. Now Ramnarrain was, to a remarkable extent, under the protection of the English. There were treaties in existence which bound them to uphold him against every movement of violence or even of severity from the Nabob, so long as he should make good the payments to which he was liable, and act with fidelity in other respects towards his master. Meer Cosseim, however, either could not or would not see, that he had no right to demand, from Ramnarrain, a full explanation of his accounts. He made the demand accordingly, which was evaded; and became forthwith involved in bitter disputes with the representatives of the English government at Patna. Appeals were, of course, made by the contending parties to the governor and council at Fort William, by whom, at the outset, a disposition was evinced to protect Ramnarrain at all hazards: but violence produces violence in every situation; and when the temper is irritated, the judgment is seldom clear. Major Carnac and Colonel Coote

both went too far, rather in the tone of their remonstrances, than in the views which they adopted; while Mr. Vansittart was equally in fault when he attributed to a feeling of personal hostility towards himself conduct which was dictated by a sense, perhaps mistaken, of public duty. The results were, that the Nabob carried his point in every particular. Ramnarrain, abandoned by the English, was arrested, his office made over to Raje-bullub, and himself put to death under circumstances of excessive injustice and cruelty.

The immediate consequence of this tragedy was the cessation of all friendly correspondence between the English and the native nobility. It was seen or imagined that the former had changed their line of policy; and while the Hindoos, as a measure of self-preservation, either gave in, or pretended to give in, their adhesion to the Nabob, the Mussulmans, anticipating a return to former usages, cordially supported him. Now it might, or it might not be wise on the part of the Europeans to add as much stability as possible to Cosseim Ali's throne; but it was clearly the reverse of wise to do so at the expense of their own reputation; for the very existence of the English power was and is bound up in the belief that a guarantee once given by them shall never be violated. Accordingly, at the moment when he was writing to Mr. Vansittart, in the language of one whose existence depended

on the favour of the English, Meer Cosseim was preparing for a breach, which the weakness of some and the extreme intemperance of others of the Company's servants hurried continually forward.

Thus far there can be no doubt that Mr. Vansittart was entirely to blame. He was not justified in granting to Meer Cosseim, powers which he had refused to Meer Jaffier; for though he might have purchased the throne at a more extravagant rate, Meer Cosseim held it on precisely the same terms which had been granted to his predecessor. But if the president was prompt to yield too much, his colleagues in office were equally well inclined to make encroachments. There had prevailed from time immemorial a practice all over India, of collecting customs on the transit of goods in the interior of the country: and to that custom Europeans as well as natives were everywhere subject. In Bengal, however, so much inconvenience had been found to arise from the system—it had proved the source of so many quarrels between the Nabob's officers and the Company's agents—that an arrangement was entered into in explanation of the emperor's firman, by which the Company's flag and dustuck, whether in their boats or other conveyances should protect from search the goods that might be in passage. Moreover, as the Company's trade consisted solely of goods imported from foreign parts, or purchased in the country

and designed for exportation, so their privilege interfered but partially with the inland trade; whilst so long as the nabobs and their officers continued in the possession of substantial authority, any attempt to abuse it was easily defeated. But when a new order of things arose, and the English, by the setting up of Meer Jaffier, had become all powerful, abuses crept in which it was found difficult to counteract. The Company's servants, who then enjoyed the privilege of private trade, and looked rather to the profits arising from it than to their salaries for the means of acquiring a competency, not only covered their private speculations by passports drawn out in the Company's name, but permitted their servants and dependents to claim exemption from internal duties on the same plea, and entered largely into the internal trade of the country. Now all this was in gross and unjustifiable violation of existing treaties. There was no sanction for it at all, even in the connivance of the Nabob, who from time to time complained of the injustice and under Clive always obtained redress. Nevertheless the practice could not be entirely put down, because the revenue officers were afraid, except in very gross cases, to interfere with the Company's flag, or question the right of a Company's servant to use it. Such was the state of things under Meer Jaffier and Clive, and such it continued to be when Cosseim Ali and Mr. Vansittart succeeded them; for in all

the conventions which settled the terms on which the soubahdary changed hands, not one word is introduced which can be interpreted as referring, even indirectly, to the rights of individual traders, whether foreign or domestic.

The spirit of cupidity, which even under Clive could not be wholly restrained, was not likely, under Mr. Vansittart, to slumber. Meer Cosseim was not slow in discovering that the abuses under which his predecessor had often suffered were still practised, and that individuals were protecting their private speculations from duty by means of the Company's flag. Of that, as well as of the insolence of the gomastahs and other native agents, he made numerous complaints; and so long as a majority of votes in the Council could be reckoned upon, the governor exhibited every disposition to afford redress. But in the month of August, 1761, there arrived from the Court of Directors an order to dismiss from their service Messrs. Sumner, McGwire, and Playdell; obedience to which, as it was peremptory and absolute, gave a new turn to the whole face of affairs. Mr. Vansittart was thenceforth in a minority on every question concerning which any differences of opinion could arise. The Council seems not to have considered what might be for the benefit of their employers, so much as how they could most effectually exhibit their contempt and hostility to their chief; and

there followed such a complication of errors, such an exhibition of violence, folly, and injustice, as it would be very difficult to set forth in detail, were the task of detailing it even desirable.

Up to this moment the part played by Mr. Hastings in the game of Indian politics had been altogether inconsiderable. As resident at the Nabob's Durbar he had little else to do than to obey such instructions as might be conveyed to him, and to communicate in his turn, to his superiors at Calcutta, whatever information he might judge worthy of their notice. Moreover I find that he was often referred to as a translator of papers and letters when the members of Council were either too indolent, or too little conversant with the native languages to translate for themselves. But the removal of these gentlemen, together with the voluntary resignation of Mr. Smith, brought him at once into a situation of greater prominency, as well as difficulty. Together with Messrs. Carter, Johnstone, and Hay, he became a member of the Supreme Council, and his name is henceforth associated, unavoidably at times, but never discreditably, with occurrences which have their record in "the most revolting page of our Indian history."

The changes which had occurred in the Council necessarily extended their influence to the out-stations. Mr. McGwire, who had heretofore re-

sided as chief of the factory at Patna, gave place to Mr. Ellis, one of the most violent impugners of the late revolution, as well as Mr. Vansittart's bitterest political enemy. Nobody could anticipate good from such an arrangement, though few, perhaps, calculated on the extent of the evil that followed; yet were the first proceedings in Council connected with, and arising out of it, sufficiently startling. The governor, distrustful of Mr. Ellis's temper, drew up a code of instructions, in which he prohibited him from interfering, on any pretext whatever, between the Nabob and his subjects; further than that he was to aid the Nabob, if formally required to do so, with all or any portion of the troops which might occupy the factory. On this a debate ensued, some of the board contending that an unlimited discretion should be granted to Mr. Ellis, as well as the right of judging whether or not the Nabob's motives were pure, and the president, though supported by Mr. Hastings and Mr. Smith, was left in a minority. The omen was a dark one, and the events that ensued accomplished the prediction to the uttermost. Mr. Ellis went to Patna, bent, as he asserted, on supporting the interests of the Company, and the honour of the English name; and in a short time the affairs of the English and the Nabob were plunged in irremediable confusion.

The tale of the troubles and calamities which

ensued, of the violence which marked men's proceedings in action, the intemperance and obstinacy which distinguished them in debate, has been told too often, and too much at length, to render a repetition of the narrative necessary by me. "A majority of the Council," to use the words of Mr. Verelst, "viewed with jealous eyes every act of government. They considered all resistance to the privilege they claimed (that of private trade) as a settled determination to subvert the power of the Company; and passion thus uniting with interest, they urged a measure of national policy with the little peevish petulance of a personal character." On the other hand, Cosseim Ali, finding that his representations produced no effect, and that the orders of the government were either evaded or disobeyed, became impatient of further delay, adopted himself measures of violence, and authorized their adoption by his officers, which seemed but to increase the hostility and discontent of the party opposed to Mr. Vansittart. An open rupture was the inevitable consequence, and the rashly planned and ill-conducted attack by Mr. Ellis upon Patna brought the question at once to the arbitration of the sword.

Before matters came to this extremity, Mr. Hastings anxiously exerted himself to produce something like unanimity in the Council, and to restore, at least, the semblance of a good under-

standing between Mr. Ellis and the Nabob. He had nothing whatever to gain by supporting Mr. Vansittart; it is certain that to some of Mr. Vansittart's measures he was greatly opposed, yet in the main he supported the governor, because he believed that justice, and a sense of what was due to the Company's interests, required that he should do so. When "the tyrant majority" proposed, for example, to introduce a dangerous novelty into the mode of conducting business, by requiring that the foreign correspondence, which had heretofore been entrusted to the governor alone, should be carried on by the Council in its collective capacity, Mr. Hastings set his face steadily against the innovation; and seeing that there yet lingered some relics of good feeling among his colleagues, he succeeded, after a severe struggle, in carrying his point. In like manner Mr. Hastings opposed himself throughout to the extravagant claims which were set up, not by the Council as the representatives of the Company, but by individuals; arguing, with perfect truth, that a change in the person of the Nabob had effected no change either in the liabilities of the office, or the rights of those by whom the change had been effected. At the same time he was not blind to the excessive rigour with which Cosseim Ali appeared disposed to vindicate his own dignity, and would willingly have lent his aid to moderate the feeling, had the tempers of those

with whom he was associated permitted. But if the Nabob was determined, Mr. Ellis and his supporters were overbearing in the extreme; so that each new day brought only a continuance of complaints, with which there was neither inclination nor power to deal wisely.

At length, after repeated interruptions both to the public and private trade, and arrests of the parties offending, leading here and there to blows, a circumstance befel, which produced great and general uneasiness. There were quartered at Patna upwards of two thousand sepoys, besides three hundred European troops, in the pay of the Company, among the former of which a disposition to desert had recently manifested itself. Mr. Ellis more than insinuated that the evil was fostered, if not caused, by the Nabob's officers. He was in this humour when a report reached him that some deserters had taken refuge in the fort of Mongheer, and he instantly marched a body of troops towards the place, with orders to search for the delinquents. Now Mongheer was not only one of the Nabob's fortresses, but it was a royal residence or palace. To insist upon dealing with it as with an open village or even a town, was therefore to insult the Nabob in the grossest manner; and his governor, or killadar, aware of that fact, refused to give admission to the party. If Mr. Ellis was indignant previously to this check, he became absolutely

furious after it had been received. He directed the commander of the detachment to hold his ground within a mile and a half of the fortification, while he himself made a report to the authorities at Calcutta of the insult which had been offered their representative.

The most wrong-minded member of the ruling body could be no longer blind to the fact, that if it were intended to avoid an open rupture with the Nabob, some step must be taken to soothe his irritated feelings. It was accordingly determined to send a deputation to his court, in order that the grounds of quarrel between him and the chiefs of the factories might be investigated; and Mr. Hastings, being as little infected with the spirit of party as, under the peculiar circumstances of the times, it was possible for any man to be, received a commission to undertake the delicate charge. Moreover, Mr. Hastings was in other respects far better qualified for the trust than any other member of the Council. His long residence at the Durbar had enabled him to become acquainted, not only with the persons of the leading men, but with the tempers of their minds, and their peculiar modes of acting. And as there was almost as much ground for uneasiness in the unsettled state of things among the natives themselves, as in the misunderstanding which had arisen between Meer Cosseim and the English, his experience, it

was felt, would be eminently useful in unravelling the mystery. For Cosseim Ali had taken great pains of late to recruit and discipline his armies. He had put to death, with a vigorous hand, several refractory chiefs or zemindars, driven others of whose fidelity he was distrustful beyond the frontier, and entered into a closer alliance with the Vizier Nabob of Oude than appeared to the gentlemen at Calcutta to be quite desirable. Into the real motives which swayed him in reference as well to these matters as to his intercourse with their own agents, Mr. Hastings had it in charge to inquire; and the manner in which he conducted his investigation distinctly proved that to none could they have been more safely or judiciously entrusted.

Taking with him a military officer, Lieutenant Ironside, and a small guard of sepoys, Mr. Hastings left Calcutta early in the month of April, 1762. The following letters to the governor will describe better than any words of mine, both the objects which he had in view and the principle on which he proposed to act in their attainment.

Moraudbaug, 15th April, 1762.

Sir,—I have received your letter of the 12th instant with the Nabob's letter inclosed. I shall not fail to enforce the several demands which you have directed me to make to the Nabob with every argument that may ensure their success.

Though I do not expect to find the deserters at Mungheer, I am heartily glad this foolish affair is at

length upon the point of a conclusion. If I find the killadar in fault, I will represent it to the Nabob, and insist upon his showing a proper resentment in punishing the instrument of so much ill-will.

As the news of the appointment of the present Nabob must have reached England before the despatch of the Chesterfield, you will doubtless learn with what temper that event was received at home, and will be able to form a very probable conjecture what measures will be taken in consequence of it. Any intelligence you can communicate to me relating to the subject, as it is what I am most anxious to learn, I shall be particularly thankful for.

The Nabob in his letter to me says, that he hopes to see me at Patna or at Sarsaran, from which I anticipate that he intends to stay at Sarsaran. Indeed I am much afraid he is reluctant to trust himself this way, and waits to see what resolution the Company may have taken in the affair of his government. This is certainly the case from the reports which I find to prevail even here; yet I wish he may be persuaded to come down to Ragemahl at least, as an appearance of distrust will hurt both his interests and the Company's. This, Sir, if you think proper, I will urge him to do.

I arrived at Moraudbaug yesterday, and had a visit from the Naib this morning. He has behaved with great civility to me, and has assisted me with several conveniences for my journey. He is a Persian, and speaks the Hindostan language but imperfectly, an elderly plain sensible man, and hitherto much liked in the city. I shall return his visit to-morrow morning, and the next day proceed on my journey.

One coss beyond Baggulpoor, 25th April.

Sir,—I beg leave to lay before you a grievance which calls loudly for redress, and will, unless duly attended to, render ineffectual any endeavours to

create a firm or lasting harmony between the Nabob and the Company; I mean the oppressions committed under the sanction of the English name, and through the want of spirit in the Nabob's subjects to oppose them. This evil, I am well assured, is not confined to our dependents alone, but is practised all over the country by people falsely assuming the habits of our sepoys, or calling themselves our gomastahs. As, on such occasions, the great power of the English intimidates the people from making any resistance, so on the other hand the indolence of the Bengalees, or the difficulty of gaining access to those who might do them justice, prevents our having knowledge of the oppressions, and encourages their continuance, to the great though unmerited scandal of our government. I have been surprised to meet with several English flags flying in places which I have passed; and on the river I do not believe that I passed a boat without one. By whatever title they have been assumed (for I could only trust to the information of my eyes, without stopping to ask questions), I am sure their frequency can bode no good to the Nabob's revenues, to the quiet of the country, or the honour of our nation; but evidently tend to lessen each of them. A party of sepoys, who were on the march before us, afforded us sufficient proofs of the rapacious and insolent spirit of these people when they are left to their own discretion. Many complaints were made against them on the road, and most of the petty towns and serais were deserted on our approach, and the shops shut up from the apprehension of the same treatment from us.

You are sensible, Sir, that it is from such little irregularities, too trivial, perhaps, for public complaint, and continually repeated, that the country people are habituated to entertain the most unfavourable opinions of our government; and by them the English credit

suffers much more than by matters which are made of greater consequence in the debates between the Nabob and us. You have already pointed out one method by which the truth of the complaints against our gomastahs may be inquired into and redressed, which I shall not fail to represent in a proper manner to the Nabob. But nothing, I fear, will ever reach the root of those evils, till some certain boundary be fixed betwixt the Nabob's authority and our privileges. Were I to suppose myself in the place of the Nabob, I should not be at a loss in what manner to protect my own subjects or servants from insults; but whilst the principle prevails, that no point (however little beneficial to ourselves) is to be given up to the Nabob, and that his authority is on every occasion to be checked for the security of our own, I should hardly venture to propose to any other besides yourself to restrain the power of our gomastahs to the immediate concerns of the Company, to which we ourselves are limited by the phirmaun, and our treaty with the Nabob; and where any persons assuming the English name are guilty of acts of violence or oppression to the Nabob's subjects, and within his territory, that the magistrate take such means as his office and the matter in question may require for preventing them, without making any distinction in such cases betwixt our agents and the dependents of the government. As the power of executing justice must be lodged somewhere, and our servants, if injured, have always the means of appealing, we may be certain that the magistrates will be very cautious how they give any such cause for complaint against them as may endanger their dismission, which should be insisted on as the slightest punishment for any notorious perversion of justice.

With regard to the abuse of our flag in defrauding the government of its duties, I know of no method so

likely to prove effectual as those which have been repeatedly recommended, and which it is needless for me to mention.

I shall forbear saying anything fully to the Nabob concerning the complaints against our people till I am favoured with your further opinion on this subject, that I may know from thence how far I may proceed towards settling that point, and preventing all future differences that may arise between us and the Nabob out of the present irregular and perplexing situation of affairs between us.

The preceding letter sets in a clear and intelligible light not only the difficulties with which the affars of the provinces were encumbered, but the causes in which those difficulties originated. It contains, moreover, suggestions which were dictated by the most obvious rules of justice and common sense; for the remedy hinted at in the concluding paragraph was the adjustment of an *ad valorem* duty, similar in principle to that of which I shall have occasion to speak by and bye; but of which the good effects were never permitted to show themselves. I subjoin the following extracts, because they exhibit both the results of Mr. Hastings's inquiry into the nature of the Nabob's relations with the King of Oude, and the effects of his administration on the internal condition of the country. It will be seen, too, that the affair of the deserters was disposed of to the entire satisfaction of all concerned, and that the writer's

opinion of Mr. Ellis's behaviour was the reverse of favourable.

Soonygurrab, 28th April, 1762.

Sir,—I have received your commands of the 21st instant. I agree entirely in your opinion concerning the reports of Shujah Dowlah's* intention of marching this way, and of our Nabob's engagements with him; the latter absurd to a degree of almost impossibility, the former hardly practicable this season. I shall spare no pains to learn what designs are really forming, and what is the state of affairs to the northward. Hitherto I have not heard a word of news from that quarter, except through your letters. * * * Mr. Ironside has acquainted you with the particulars of his search after the deserters in Mongheer fort yesterday, which makes it needless for me to say anything on that subject. I visited the fort likewise myself, though not with a view of assisting his inquiry; for I would as soon hope to find a stray pebble on the mountains around it as a deserter in a place like Mongheer. The sepoys and sergeant are still at their station at Juffiabad. I shall inform Mr. Ellis of the search having been made, in the hope that he will be content to recall them.

Patna, 4th May, 1762.

* * * * * *

The first inquiry that I made upon my arrival was concerning the late executions. I am informed that the Nabob had intercepted letters from Sutaram, Sheikh Sadoolla, and others, to Pulwan Sing and other disaffected persons, encouraging them in their rebellion by arguments drawn from the disagreements between the Nabob and Mr. Ellis, which they should contrive to draw to such length as to induce the Nabob to quit the

* The King of Oude, of whose hostile designs many rumours were afloat.

province, and then the design was laid to take his life. Sutaram and the hircarrahs were confronted with the letters in a large and public Durbar. They all confessed their guilt, and threw themselves upon his mercy; but the whole assembly unanimously declared that they deserved death, and the same instant they were accordingly carried out and executed. Sheikh Sadoolla being stationed at some distance, the Nabob summoned him to appear before him, but he refused it, and the Nabob detached a party to bring him by force. A fray ensued, and Sheikh Sadoolla, with some others on both sides, was slain.

I shall leave no means untried to learn the true causes of the late disputes, and the just state of complaints on both sides I shall freely and fully represent. You, I hope, Sir, will do me the justice to believe that I have no prejudices so violent as to make me support any cause to the prejudice of truth, nor that I have made so little use of the experience I have had of the Durbar transactions as to give credit to every interested information that is given me, or form any conclusion but on facts, or a fair statement of arguments on each side of the question.

I could have wished to have seen Mr. Ellis, who is at Surgia. Had he been inclined to a reconcilement with the Nabob, or to restore a good harmony between us, I think he would (knowing that I came on such a commission) have put it in my power, at least, to have seen him.

A similar impression of the justice and vigour of the Nabob's administration, as well as the honesty of his designs in the alliance which he had formed with Sujah Dowlah, is conveyed in the following passages, which I select from Mr.

Hastings's memorable letter to the governor, bearing date January the 26th, 1762. I do not transcribe the whole, though the whole is excellent, because the opinion of the writer touching Mr. Ellis's misconduct was a great deal too valuable not to have found its way into Mr. Vansittart's narrative.

Whatever was the Nabob's motive for his continuance in this country, he has certainly employed his time to the greatest advantage, having entirely reduced the province to his obedience, placed garrisons in all the principal fortresses, and made the most prudent regulation of the revenue, which, by his account, will hardly fall short of that of Bengal. Besides this, he has disbanded all his refractory jemetdars, and compelled them to quit the province, which he could not have so easily managed at a greater distance from his borders. * * There seems to be a great harmony subsisting between Shujah Dowlah and Cosseim Ali Cawn. They have reciprocally engaged to deliver up the malcontent zemindars of each side that shall take refuge in each other's districts. It is in consequence of this contract that the Nabob has taken the fort of Seringia for Shujah Dowlah from Door-bussy Singh, one of the B[illegible] zemindars who had possessed himself of it, and has delivered it up to Dowlah, who, it seems, has not been deficient on his part, though the particulars have not yet come to my knowledge. The conclusion which I should naturally form from these appearances is, that Shujah Dowlah is earnestly bent on supporting the King's pretensions to the throne, and is willing to keep on good terms with a neighbour who might greatly interrupt him in his designs. He would hardly join our Nabob in distressing the enemies

of this province if he had any intention of invading it. It is, besides, inconsistent with the spirit he has ever shown to quit an enterprise so flattering to his ambition for a mere acquisition of territory, in which, too, he would scarce succeed so well.

The Nabob is so well pleased with his situation and prosperity that he seems little inclined to leave this place soon.

To Colonel COOTE.

Sarsaram, May 11.

You should have heard from me sooner had I any other subject to communicate to you besides the progress I had made in my journey, which I thought little worthy of attention.

I arrived at Sarsaram the 9th, and was kindly received by the Nabob. He inquired in a friendly manner both after the governor and yourself, and expressed towards you such a disposition as I wished. The motives of the Nabob's stay in this country have been much misrepresented, if I may judge from the use he has made of it. He has driven Palwan Sing and the Baaj-poor zemindars entirely out of the country, and obliged them to take refuge at Ghazepoor, where they are likely to be plundered by Shujah Dowlah's zemindars. He has very prudently garrisoned the forts of the country, and stationed a considerable force at each of the passes from the next province. In short, he has acquired the unmolested possession of the whole province of Bahar on both sides of the Ganges.

Besides this reasonable inducement for his continuance here, he had another not less important, if not so lucrative—I mean the discharging of his troops. Most of the principal jemetdars had been the successive jemetdars of the government from the time of Lefroy Cawn to the present. By the help of false musters, into which, by a long connivance, the neglect

of his predecessors, and the pretence of a very long arrears, it became dangerous to scrutinize, their expenses eat up the Nabob's revenue, though scarce one would go upon any service when required by him. This determined the Nabob to dismiss them, and new model his army. He chose this place for that work, being the most convenient by its situation for expelling them from the country as he disbanded them; and this point he has very effectually settled.

You have doubtless been entertained with the report of the Nabob's alliance with Shujah Dowlah—as you were before I left Calcutta with his engagements with Shewbrit, the murders of Sutaram, &c. for their wealth, and his retirement to the borders of his dominions through fear of the Company's annulling his appointment to the soubahship. Excepting the last, which, from the general opinion, was not a very improbable conjecture, I look upon those rumours as so opposite to the Nabob's character, his interest, and to common sense, that I should be ashamed to pay so ill a compliment to your penetration as to make use of any arguments to show their falsity, were I ignorant of the uncommon pains which have been taken to make them plausible.

With regard to the Nabob's alliance with Shujah Dowlah, it is true that they are upon very good terms, having reciprocally engaged to deliver up the rebellious zemindars on each side that shall fly to either for protection; which, to me, is a conviction that Shujah Dowlah is fixed in his design of carrying the King to Delhi, and is willing to keep on a footing of friendship with Cosseim Ali Cawn, who might prove an obstacle to his enterprise or attack his country in his absence. But that Cosseim Ali Cawn would invite so powerful an enemy into his own territories with no other view than to expel the English—the very proposition (not to

mention the strong tincture which it bears of prejudice) carries on it such self-evident marks of inconsistency, that the Nabob must be stark mad before I would give it so much credit as even to debate the truth of it.

With regard to Shewbrit, the Nabob has assured me of his intention to fit out an expedition against him and for the recovery of that province the next season; and the Mahratta Vakeels have been long since dismissed.

The story of Sutaram's plot is very long; the principal facts I will inform you of:—

Letters from Rajah Sutaram, one of the Nabob's principal dewans, and Sheikh Sadoolla, a jematdar who was greatly in his confidence, to Pulwan Sing and others of the disaffected zemindars, were intercepted by the Nabob. From these it appeared that they had engaged the zemindars in their resistance, and planned a scheme for the Nabob's destruction, and that the Munseram and Norram Sing hircarrahs were the principal managers in the correspondence. They (Sadoolla excepted) were confronted with the letters in a large and public Durbar, and confessed their guilt. The whole assembly pronounced them worthy of death, and they were accordingly conducted without the camp and shot. About the same time Sheikh Sadoolla Cawn retired from the camp without the Nabob's order, who sent for him; and, upon his refusal to come, attended with an insolent message, a party was detached to bring him by force, or put him to death if he resisted. He still refused to obey the summons, and lost his life by it.

I have in the beginning of this letter accounted for the Nabob's stay so long near his borders, and need say no more on the surmises occasioned on that head.

This candid and sensible letter I have been tempted to give at length, because it contains a plain statement of Mr. Hastings's opinion in refer-

ence to the Nabob's general mode of proceeding, as well with his own subjects as with his neighbours. It shows that in Mr. Hastings's view of the case Cosseim Ali was neither a tyrant nor an intriguer, but simply a man of vigorous understanding, who, finding himself placed in a station of high authority, was determined to command both the obedience of his vassals and the respect of those with whom he might enter into treaties. In like manner I cannot resist the desire which I feel of transcribing one other, written four days subsequently to the preceding, because I think that there will be found in it the clearest and most satisfactory proofs that up to this date, at least, Mr. Hastings was actuated by sentiments the very opposite of those which tempt a man to outrage the rights of others, simply because he believes that he may do so with impunity. It is addressed to Mr. Vansittart, and was by that gentleman inserted long ago into the narrative of his government;—

Sarsaram, 18th May, 1762.

I explained to the Nabob what you wrote to me concerning the abuse of the English name and authority, and the expedients proposed for their removal, which I extracted from your letter, and gave him, written under the following heads:—

First,—That strict orders be given to the darogas of the chokeys to require every English boat that passes to produce a dustuck, under the seal of the government or any chief of the subordinate factories, and in case of a refusal that they compel the boats to bring to.

Second,—That every boat with English colours, and not having a dustuck, be stopped; and if the goods be English property, that notice be given to the chief of the nearest factory, that it may be inquired into; but if it be the property of a subject of the circar, that the Nabob take what notice of it he may think proper.

Third,—That strict orders be given to the officers and foujdars of the circar, if any English gomastah commit any act of aggression, or interfere in the affairs of the government, to forbid them; and if they refuse to hear reason, to use force to make them desist.

Fourth,—That strict orders have been sent from the presidency that none of the gomastahs or servants of the factory intermeddle with the affairs of the government, and that the officers of the circar be likewise strictly enjoined not to obstruct the Company's business or oppress the people employed in it.

Fifth,—That no grants of wadadaries, farms, or other offices of the government, be allowed to the Company's gomastahs.

Sixth,—That the Company's gomastahs shall be allowed an English flag at the place of their residence; but no private gomastahs shall have an English flag or assume any distinction from the English name.

Seventh,—That by an order from the presidency, no European shall be employed in the country without a permission from the board, and giving security that he would not interfere in any affairs of the government.

Upon the two first heads the Nabob remarked, that it was to no purpose for him to give such orders to his officers, though backed with your dustucks, since both have proved ineffectual to restrain the presumption of our people, who seldom choose to produce their dustucks; and if the officer acts as his duty requires him, a complaint is instantly sent to the next factory of the insolence of the chokeys, the indignity offered to our

flag, and the infringement of our dustucks. Sepoys are despatched to seize the offender, and others, dreading the like treatment, let pass all boats indiscriminately, and amongst them many that have no dustucks.

In the third article I have deviated a little from your instructions, as I believe that you will be convinced that the gomastahs are not to be kept in awe by threats alone; but some coercive power must be allowed the magistrates, without which the gomastahs, knowing the difficulty of finding out the truth of facts so remote from our inquiries, will be continually intermeddling in matters which do not concern them. I make no doubt but the officers of the government will be tempted, as they have many times done, to abuse their authority; but the Company's business and the English name will suffer less by a few instances of this kind than by the unlimited power so often assumed by our agents. An example made of the first attempts of the magistrates to oppress our people will intimidate others; but to have every little grievance on either side referred to the Nabob or yourself will be a source of perpetual disagreement, and the inquiries will be found so perplexed that I doubt if any redress will be obtained on either side.

Notwithstanding this alteration, the proposal is not satisfactory to the Nabob, as long as a power is lodged with the gentlemen of our factories, on every complaint of the gomastahs, to send out parties of sepoys against such as they pretend have misbehaved to them. This evil is, therefore, first to be redressed.

To the fifth the Nabob gives his entire assent, and desires that the gomastahs and all others under our protection be forbid to take or to solicit offices under the government, which he has found very detrimental to the peace of the country.

The sixth, I hope, expresses your intention, as the

private gomastahs have no need of the protection of the English name to carry on their business at the aurungs, nor can claim any privilege above other traders, besides that of bringing away their goods when provided with the Company's dustuck.

To these the Nabob desired another article might be added, though implicitly included in the foregoing, viz., that the gomastahs shall not force their goods on his subjects against their will or at their own prices, nor compel the workmen to provide goods for them at unreasonable rates; but that every man be left at his own option to buy or sell, as he finds his advantage in either.

As the Nabob has no objection to any of the means which you have so often proposed for preventing the disputes between his people and the Company's, but only to the want of a proper authority to enforce the execution of them, he desires that whatever regulations you may judge necessary for the above end, may be drawn up in form and sent to him, with the seal of the Company; and if your name added to it be not sufficient to prevent future cavils, that it be signed likewise by the rest of the Council. Such a warrant will limit, beyond the possibility of a dispute, the extent of our privileges and his authority, and point out the means by which he may preserve his government entire, without incurring the imputation of trampling on the rights of the Company.

It seems difficult to understand upon what principle propositions so fair to all parties, and at the same time so advantageous to the English, should have been rejected. Rejected, however, they were. The majority in the Council denounced the governor's plan as insulting to the honour of the English

name, and insisted upon their own rights, and the rights of their servants, to trade upon terms which must bring ruin upon all the native merchants. That any boat bearing the English flag, moreover, should be stopped by the Nabob's officers, or any person claiming the protection of that flag be punished by the Nabob's magistrates, was not to be tolerated for a moment. They were quite willing to avoid a rupture, and indeed to be upon amicable terms with Cosseim Ali; but then it must be upon their own terms. Accordingly Mr. Hastings, after three months of anxious labour, returned to the presidency, having accomplished nothing; for all the bad passions which it had been his object to soothe were still raging, and prejudice was as violent as ever.

I must hurry over the residue of this narrative, which there is the less necessity to prolong, because the part played by Mr. Hastings in the transactions that followed was altogether secondary. When it was found that neither by argument nor entreaty could the majority in the Council be induced to alter their opinions, that they would not entrust the Nabob with the slightest degree of authority, but persisted in arresting his officers and magistrates as often as a complaint was lodged against them by one of their own agents, a new scheme was devised by Mr. Vansittart and his party, of which they considered it judicious to keep the details secret till

after the whole should have been fully matured and digested. The scheme in question was that memorable compact by which the right of private trade was guaranteed to the English on the payment of an *ad valorem* duty of nine per cent. on the prime cost of the articles purchased for barter. Unfortunately, however, the qualities of moderation and temper were alike wanting on the side of the Council and of the Nabob. The former fired up when it was explained to them that to the Nabob's officers was conceded the right of adjudication and enforcement of the fiscal demands; the latter evinced a determination not to abate one jot of the powers which belonged to him by virtue of the treaty. Moreover he acted with some degree of bad faith in making public the particulars of the convention, before these had been confirmed by the Council at Calcutta. The consequences are well known. Everywhere confusion became doubly confounded, till by and bye the Nabob, in a paroxysm of fury, abolished all the transit duties throughout his dominions, and so threw open the inland trade to merchants of all nations.

This act of the Nabob, though the mere offspring of necessity, and fatal in its consequences to his own revenue, was exclaimed against at Calcutta as an infringement of all his engagements with the Company. They insisted upon that it should be annulled; and while two of their body were sent to

lay the sense of their grievances before the Durbar, it was determined, in the face of a protest from both the governor and Mr. Hastings, not to be satisfied with less than absolute submission. In a word, the majority in the Council appear to have forgotten that from men in high stations some regard to justice and some display of temper are expected. They passed a resolution that from all the out-stations the absent members of their body should be called in. They invited to assist them by their opinions and votes the two chief commanders of the troops, as if a dispute about trade had been a military question, on which alone, by the fundamental constitution of the government, military officers were permitted to advise. Finally, they made new distributions of their troops, despatched a supply of arms to Patna, and gave to Mr. Ellis authority to plunge them into war whenever, according to his prejudiced conception of things, the fitting moment should arrive. All that followed is matter of history; Mr. Amyatt and Mr. Hall were arrested; the boats laden with arms were detained; Mr. Ellis, in an evil hour, made an attack upon Patna, and hostilities began in earnest. They ended, it is true, in the overthrow of Cosseim Ali and the unconditional submission of his ally, Shujah Dowlah; but not till they had cost the lives of many

estimable persons, of whom none were more justly or universally lamented than Mr. Amyatt.

Throughout the whole of these transactions I find Mr. Hastings voting with steadiness and temper on the side of moderation, and in support of the governor. For this he was severely censured by his colleagues; indeed, to such a height was the rancour of one at least of the number carried, that more than angry words passed between him and Mr. Hastings at the very Board. I allude to Mr. Batson, who, not content with delivering a remark to the effect that "the governor and Mr. Hastings had espoused the Nabob's cause, and, as hired solicitors, defended all his actions, however dishonourable and detrimental to the Company and the nation," carried his hostility to the latter of these gentlemen so far as to give him the lie, and strike him a blow in the public Council. Such an insult, offered in such a place, was not to be vindicated by an appeal to the pistol. Mr. Hastings left to the Council the care of vindicating their own honour, which, more than his, had been outraged by the behaviour of Mr. Batson; and the Council, albeit little disposed to favour the complainant individually, were yet forced to deal with the affair as it deserved. Mr. Batson, severely censured by a unanimous vote of the Council, was called upon "to make such satisfaction as the

members of the Board shall judge proper, and the Company's orders do, in such cases, direct."

This quarrel with Mr. Batson occurred on the 9th of June, 1763. It was not, however, the only dispute into which a sense of public duty hurried Mr. Hastings. His protest against the authority given to the chief and council at Patna, of taking such measures as they thought proper for their own security, obtained for him the personal ill-will of Mr. Ellis; while Major Carnac owed him more than a grudge for the opposition which he gave to the appointment of that officer to the chief command at Patna. "I beg leave," says Mr. Hastings, in a minute which bears date the 21st of March, "to remind the Board, upon this occasion, of the repeated declarations made by Major Carnac, and now upon record in the consultations of 1761, that he would obey no orders from the president and council, which agreed not with his sentiments of honour, justice, and propriety. Till, therefore, Major Carnac shall retract that resolution, which may be productive of the most unhappy consequences to the service, and entirely subverts the authority of the Board, I think it my duty to protest against his being allowed to take the field with the command of the troops." Such a protest could hardly fail of drawing from him who was its object a very angry reply. Yet it is a remarkable fact, that this very person, whom his colleagues

accused of desiring to sacrifice them and the interests of the Company to the Nabob, whom he favoured, should have been charged by the same Nabob, at the very same instant of time, of having been the principal cause of all the disorders which had arisen. The following letter from Cosseim Ali to Mr. Vansittart appears to me too curious to be omitted. It seems to prove that the whole bent and aim of Mr. Hastings's policy was to mediate fairly between two parties, neither of whom would listen to his suggestions, because they were both grossly in the wrong. The date of the letter I cannot discover, but it was received at Calcutta on the 26th of June, 1763:—

"I have received your letter. You write that when I went to Calcutta I made this entreaty, that Meer Mahmud Jaffier Cawn might only sit on the musnud of the Nizamut, and the affairs be under my direction, which was accordingly agreed to, and you came to Moorshedabad in order to engage the assent of the Cawn aforesaid. That again I said to you at Muradbaug, 'If the measures agreed upon do not take place to-day, I shall not live till to-morrow;' for which reason you placed some forces at the house of the Cawn afore-named, and I continued in my own house till their arrival; that after this the Mahratta army ravaged the districts of Burboom, &c., and you ask whether the Shaw's army was defeated by the forces of the circar or the English; that both great and small in this country know that if at that time the English forces had not been present in every place, my subahdary would not have been of three months'

duration; that the condition of the Cawn aforenamed, in such a state of the country and the Nizamut at that period, appeared to you without remedy; that when I went to Calcutta, I professed the same opinion; and if I had any other design in my mind, it was unbecoming in me to deceive you, and engage in that business.

"Sir, in the commencement of affairs, what I said, and what 'entreaties' I made to you, gentlemen, at Calcutta and Moorshedabad, and in what manner the English forces went to the house of Meer Mahmud Jaffier Cawn, and how I sat still in my house,—these particulars are every one as manifest as the sun; they are clear and evident to you, and to write or speak them is superfluous. Nevertheless, you no doubt well know this, that all this distraction and ruin brought upon my affairs *are owing to Mr. Hastings*, both in what is past and what is to come. Two or three months before this transaction I was desirous of taking upon me the business of my own family, and the care of the country. That gentleman said, 'Engage the English in your interests.' From the business which I undertook, and the snare which I fell into, by trusting to their friendly engagements, the day is come on which I am to hear these stories, and to see these evils.

"With regard to that expression of mine, that 'I shall not live till to-morrow,' this, too, you very well know, when I had departed from my own house, in what manner you sent your people with me for the protection of my life; and whether I went to Muradbaug of my own accord, or you sent for me; and during four days that I remained in my own house, with my friends, with my artillery, &c., in readiness, what care you took of me. It is true that on the day of the removal of the said Nabob from the administration of the Nizamut, when my people went four ghurrees

before day, and surrounded the palace; and I afterwards rode out and stood before my own gate; then Mr. Hastings, with the English forces, arrived, and prevailed upon me by expressions of friendship and flattering promises. Otherwise that Nabob was my lord, why should I have deserted him? I should have restored him to his authority, and regarded the exact performance of my duty to him as my own happiness. But how long shall we argue upon this subject? It is as manifest as the sun, and there is no need to write about it. The author of all these evils is Mr. Hastings.

"That you expelled the Mahrattas from Burbhoom, and defeated the prince in Bahar! oh gracious God! This reformation and order was brought about by the forces of you gentlemen! It was not the work, nor in the power, of any other, that the prince's army laid waste and plundered the country, in spite of the army of Meer Mahmud Jaffier Cawn, assisted by your own forces! What relief did you afford on this occasion? Why did you not expel the prince's army from the country, instead of inviting him, by entreaties and prayers, into Azimabad, and subjecting me, for the space of six months, to the heavy charge of maintaining both my own army and the troops of the prince? Since Meer Mahmud Jaffier Cawn was your ally, why did you expose him to sink under the expenses of his army? Why did you not drive out the Mahrattas from his country, who for five years had been destroying it, and the prince's troops which were laying it waste? and why did you not apply a remedy to the ruinous state of the country? These evils you may call victories; but every one knows that such gentleness and kindness shown to enemies, are the effects of weakness and not of power.

"You ask me again why I deceived you? In what have I deceived or betrayed you? I never devoured

two or three crores of rupees of the treasure of Meer Jaffier Cawn. I never seized a boga or a beswa of the land belonging to Calcutta, nor have I ever imprisoned your gomastahs. Have I not discharged the debts contracted by the Cawn aforenamed? Did I procure from you, gentlemen, the payment of the arrears of his army, or put you to the expense of maintaining the Company's forces? In which of these instances have I deceived or betrayed you? I gave you a country which produced near a crore of rupees. Was it for this only, that after two or three months you should place another on the musnud of the Nizamut? By what religious custom or treaty are these practices authorized, that such designs should find a place in your hearts? To raise a Nazim and then depose him is only the business and in the power of you, gentlemen; none other can do it. Three years are the same as three months. If such be your design, what does it signify? Let your design appear, nor be longer deferred.

"In a word, sir, consider well whether to take the country of Burdwan, a country of near a crore of rupees, for the expenses of your forces, on the stipulated condition of assisting me with those forces, and from the date of the treaty till now to act in contradiction to it, are arguments that I have deceived you, gentlemen, or you me. On this point I call on you for justice."

Two facts would, I think, be established, even by this letter did it stand alone, first, that "the four years of Mr. Vansittart's government exhibit the darkest page in the volume of our Indian history;" and next, that by whomsoever that page may have been thrown into the shade, no portion of the blame

attaches to Mr. Hastings. He was not one of those who desired to wring from the unhappy Nabob concessions which were not only not stipulated for in the treaty which raised him to the throne, but which, if obtained, could not have failed of involving him, and all who looked to him for protection, in irretrievable ruin. Yet Mr. Hastings, the defender of the Nabob's rights, and the champion, throughout, of the just rights of the Nabob's subjects, is the man whom in after years we shall find arraigned before the House of Lords, as a remorseless oppressor of the natives of India. But I must not anticipate the course of my narrative; and I have hazarded this remark only by way of attracting the attention of my readers, to the ground of hostility, which thus early in his career was taken up against him by his associates in the government of Bengal.

With the events which followed upon this open breach between Meer Cosseim and the English, including the massacre of Mongheer, the deposition of the Nabob, the restoration of Meer Jaffier, and the successful campaign of Major Adams, Major Carnac, and Major Munro, I have here very little concern. Though he had strenuously opposed himself to the policy of the Council while yet there seemed a chance of an amicable settlement of the disputes between them and Cosseim Ali, Mr. Hastings did not hesitate to join the governor in

voting for the deposition of the Nabob, so soon as the question came to be one of absolute existence; and his best efforts were never wanting to push the war to an extremity. But it is quite certain that he lamented the necessity which drove him to adopt this course, and never afterwards ceased to speak of it as in the highest degree disgraceful to the English character in India.

I exceedingly regret that of the tenor of Mr. Hastings's private life, I am unable, during this interesting period, to give any detailed account. Of his familiar correspondence, not a shred, as far as I know, has been preserved, and as all his contemporaries have long ago been gathered to their fathers, even tradition is silent on the subject. I find myself, therefore, without authority to say more, than that in addition to the death of his daughter he lost his wife, where, or under what circumstances, I know not, in 1759; and that in 1761 he sent his son George to Europe, for the purpose of prosecuting his education. So complete, however, and so impenetrable is the mystery which has enveloped the early career of this great man, that I have not been able to ascertain so much as the name of the parties to whom this precious charge was intrusted. It is probable, indeed, that he committed him to the care of his sister, Mrs. Woodman, and her husband, and it cannot be doubted that, if the case were so, they disposed of the child

where they believed that he would be rightly dealt by. Yet all this is mere conjecture. I must therefore content myself with stating, that after fifteen years of laborious service in India, Mr. Hastings resigned his seat as a member of council in the month of November, 1764, and returned, master of a very moderate fortune, in his Majesty's ship the Medway, together with his friend Mr. Vansittart, to England.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Hastings in England—The embarrassment of his Affairs—His desire to return to India—Examined before the House of Commons—Retrospect of Occurrences in Bengal and Carnatic.

A FOURTEEN years residence in the golden province of Bengal, during which more than the usual opportunities of amassing wealth were afforded him, had not, in Mr. Hastings's case, produced the results on which it was customary in those days to calculate. Not once can I find his name included in the list of those, to whom nabob, or vizier, or native agent of either, had offered a gift; nor in a solitary instance was the suspicion excited towards him, that he might have accepted presents, yet kept the secret to himself. I do not mean to assert that he received no mark of the good will of the prince at whose court he so long resided; or that the nobles of Moorshedabad withheld from him the keilat, or gift of ceremony, which it was their custom to extend to the rest of their guests. But in the legitimate fruits, or what were so accounted, of the various revolutions which he contributed to bring about, it is clear that, for some reason or another, he was not a partaker. Of Drake, Clive, Vansittart, Carnac, Munro, Spencer, and indeed of all who from

1757 down to 1764, had acted as governor, commander of troops, or member of council, in the Company's service, it is officially on record, that they extorted sums, always considerable, in various instances enormous, out of the gratitude, or it may be the necessities, of the native princes. But in the catalogue of persons so honoured, I have not been able, after the most diligent search, to discover, that the name of Hastings is anywhere included.

I may, perhaps, be permitted to add, that the fact, for such it is, reflects immortal honour on his memory. I am sure that men's knowledge of it ought to have screened him, in a later stage of his career, from some of the calumnies with which party malice sought to overwhelm him; yet is it past dispute, that the consequences of his own moderation were in the meanwhile extremely inconvenient to himself. Mr. Hastings returned to the land of his birth comparatively a poor man, and so extreme had been his carelessness in the adjustment of his personal affairs, that he soon became a needy one. I have been told by those who enjoyed the advantages of his intimacy, and heard him converse, which he could seldom be induced to do, upon the events of his early life, that he brought with him only a small portion of his savings to England, and that the bulk of them was left in Bengal on security which failed him. Though I cannot, on such authority, give the state-

ment as a fact, I see no just reason why it should be questioned, because it was from first to last a conspicuous trait in Mr. Hastings's character, that he never put the smallest value upon money. But there is now lying before me a letter from Mr., afterwards Sir Francis Sykes, bearing date Muxadabad, 24th November, 1768, which seems to establish the truth of the rumour beyond dispute: "I hope our friend Hastings," says he, "will before this have, by the interest of his friends, secured an appointment in the service. He has managed his cards very ill, and between you and me, I never saw such confused accounts as he left behind him." Whether the property which he had failed to realize ere quitting the scene of his labours was or was not lost I know not; but the short extract just transcribed clearly proves that he was the reverse of cautious respecting the means that were adopted to secure it.

Mr. Hastings returned to England in comparatively narrow circumstances, and soon, for the reasons just detailed, fell into embarrassments; yet was the generosity of his disposition abundantly displayed in the care which he took to minister to the necessities of others. His sister, as has elsewhere been stated, had married a Mr. Woodman, who afterwards, if I am rightly informed, became steward to the Duke of Bridgewater. To her, so early as 1764, he made a pre-

sent of £1000, while on his aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Hastings, whose means appear to have been very limited, he settled an annuity of £200. It would appear that towards the end of his temporary sojourn in England, he found serious difficulties in fulfilling the latter contract. Nevertheless he made no proposal to diminish, far less to withdraw, the allowance, though he was driven, in the end, to the necessity of borrowing in order to make his payments good.

It has been a subject of great regret to myself, and cannot fail, I am sure, of disappointing my readers, that all the inquiries which I have made into the manner of Mr. Hastings's life and conversation at this stage in his career, have led to nothing. Of his epistolary correspondence I have not succeeded in recovering any portion, and even common fame, a poor substitute at the best for the *litera scripta*, is silent on the subject. I have been given to understand, indeed, that in conversation he was well-nigh as reserved in his allusions to the interval between 1765 and 1769, as he was shy of referring to the season of his boyhood; and I draw from the circumstance a conclusion similar to that which forced itself upon me when sketching the occurrences of earlier days. But whether his time passed unpleasantly, or that his silence was occasioned by the mere dearth of matter, on which to dilate, I cannot undertake to determine. Un-

der these circumstances there remains for me only one course to follow: I must confine myself rather to the correction of one or two mistakes into which others have fallen, than attempt any exposition of matters which are hidden from me; and then pass on to a more inviting field, where his own letters will illustrate better than any narrative of mine, both the nature of his occupations, and the habits of his mind.

I find it stated in the Gentleman's Magazine, and again in several numbers of the Oriental Herald, that so early as the winter of 1765, "he employed all his interest to be allowed to return to India, and failed in obtaining the requisite permission." I am not in a condition to say whether this statement be or be not correct, but in those which follow I know that there are errors. He may have devoted himself, for aught I know to the contrary, "to the cultivation of literature, and the enjoyment of the society of men of genius." To literature Mr. Hastings manifested a decided predilection at every stage in his long and eventful life; and for the enjoyment of such society as his anonymous biographer describes, he was eminently fitted. But if it be the purport of this remark to convey an impression that Mr. Hastings ever sought to turn his literary talents to a profitable account, the writer has quite misapprehended the truth of the case. I have the best authority for

asserting, that Mr. Hastings never printed or published any treatise, or poem, or essay, except at a pecuniary loss to himself. Again, there occurs, in continuation of the narrative, expressions from which it has been inferred that Warren Hastings meditated at one time a plan for supporting himself by the drudgery of tuition. "The year after his arrival in London," says the Calcutta Journal, "he submitted a proposition for establishing a professorship for the Persian language at Oxford, with a view, among other motives, to his obtaining the emoluments of that situation in aid of his own income." Now there are two mistakes here, both of which, on the authority of some memoranda in Mr. Hastings's handwriting, I am enabled to correct. In the first place, it was not at Oxford, but in some seminary to be founded by the East India Company, that Mr. Hastings proposed to establish a professorship; and in the next place, he made his proposition without any view at all to his own personal profit. "I formed," says Mr. Hastings, in the manuscript notes now before me, "a plan for such an institution, but I never offered, nor intended, to superintend it. I was not qualified for it; indeed my intention was to obtain professors from India."

But whatever Mr. Hastings's views might be, however straitened his means or cheerless his prospects, events were already working out for

him the prospect of a return to that field of political exertion, in which he was so well qualified to excel. It will be borne in mind that in the year 1766, the affairs of the Company came much under the notice of the public, and that in the House of Commons a rigid inquiry was instituted as to the system by which their newly acquired empire was governed. Mr. Hastings, among others, was on that occasion called upon to give his evidence, and the clear and masterly views which he took of the whole subject, drew upon him the regard both of the minister and the Court of Directors. The consequences were the entertainment in a much more friendly spirit of his application to be restored to the service; and his ultimate appointment, in the winter of 1768, to the office of second in council at Fort St. George. It will be necessary to a right understanding of much that is to follow, that I should here break off, for a little space, in the thread of his personal history, while we trace with a rapid hand the outline of the most important of the events, which befel both in Bengal and the Carnatic during Hastings's temporary sojourn at home.

Bengal.

Notice has elsewhere been taken of the re-instatement in 1763 of Meer Jaffier on the throne of Bengal. It was an act to which both Mr.

Vansittart and Mr. Hastings were consenting, and it secured to the Company the permanent possession of the provinces of Midnapore, Burdwan and Chittagong, over the revenues of which a mortgage had been granted by Cossim Ally as security for the payment of the sums that were still due from him. Meer Jaffier, however, did not enter at this time upon the unrestricted exercise of all the powers which former nabobs had wielded. The English obtained from him the unlimited right of free trade, and forced upon him a finance minister under the title of Naib Duan. This was Nuncomar, an intriguing and crafty man, of whom notice has elsewhere been taken, and of whom notice will be taken again; and he was appointed in preference to a Mahommedan financier, Mahommed Reza Cawn, for no other ostensible reason than because the majority in the Council were still resolute to thwart the governor in every thing.

Meanwhile hostilities were carried on with perfect success against Meer Cossim, who retreated into the territories of Oude, and was there joined by the vizier Shujah Dowlah, and the forces of Shah Allum, the king or great mogul. The union of the latter was indeed understood to be compulsory, for he was in the Vizier's power, and his agent at Calcutta, Shitob Roy, made the Council aware of the circumstance; but had the case been otherwise, there was no longer any disposition on the

part of the English to deal with him except as their own conveniences might suggest. Accordingly the army marched across the frontier, under major, afterward Sir Hector Munro, and at a place called Buxar, on the Ganges, engaged the forces of the allies, and on the 23d of October, 1764, totally defeated them.

On the 5th of November, Mr. Vansittart, attended by Mr. Hastings, embarked, as has been related, on board his Majesty's ship the Medway, leaving the charge of the government, and the care of settling the country, to Mr. Spencer. Under his auspices the war was prosecuted with vigour. The King withdrew from his dependence on Shujah Dowlah and was taken under the protection of the Company. He made over to them by grant, on the 29th of December, the country of Ghazeepoor, and indeed the whole of that zemindarree within the soubahship of Oude, of which Rajah Bulwant Sing was in the occupation, and received from them in return a pledge, that they would establish him at Allahabad, and put him in possession of the remainder of Shujah Dowlah's territories. That pledge, in spite of a partial failure before Allahabad, they contrived by and bye to redeem, though the terms of the agreement were ultimately changed. By the subsequent treaty of Allahabad, to which the Company, the Nabob, and Shujah Dowlah were parties, the Vizier was rein-

stated in all his dominions, Corah and Allahabad. Rajah Bulwant Sing was in like manner permitted to resume the management of his zemindary, while provision was made for the Emperor's dignity by granting him, out of the revenues of Bengal, an annual tribute of twenty lacs, together with the two districts above specified, of which the revenues were estimated at five lacs additional. These events, however, it is necessary to observe, did not befal till the summer of 1765, when arrangements had been concluded with the Nabob which placed the Company in a new attitude, and rendered them competent to discharge so heavy a pecuniary obligation.

Whilst these events were in progress, Meer Jaffier died, and his son, Nujeem ud Dowlah, ascended the throne. The servants of the Company were not, of course, neglectful of the opportunity which was thus afforded of enriching themselves. They extorted from the young Nabob valuable presents, and setting aside Nuncomar, no longer an object of their regard, promoted Mahommed Reza Cawn to the office of Naib Duan, and caused him, as well as his master, to pay for his advancement. It cannot be said of them that they were equally attentive either to the interests of their employers, or the prosperity of the provinces. To be sure they took upon themselves the whole military defence of the soubahdary, an arrangement from

which they anticipated both greater security to the Nabob, and diminished expenditure by themselves; and they stipulated for a continuance during the war of five lacs per month towards defraying the expenses entailed upon them. But they were much more in concert on the subject of free trade, to which by the terms of a formal treaty they established their right. Hence not only were opportunities afforded of acquiring large fortunes within a limited period of time, but the attention of members of council, of factors, and even of junior merchants, was turned absolutely into a new channel. The Company's affairs were left to shift for themselves, while each man gave up his best attention to his own.

The circumstances under which Lord Clive re-assumed the government at Bengal are too well known to demand repetition here. He went out armed with authority to correct all abuses, and wielded the power thus entrusted to him with a vigorous hand. Great expectations were in consequence excited, which, like all that had preceded them, fell to the ground; for though his regulations may have been the best which the exigencies of the moment would permit him to establish, they were certainly not such as to ensure to the provinces the blessings of a good government in perpetuity. Lord Clive struck, indeed, at the root of one serious evil by causing the covenant to be ratified which precluded the Com-

pany's servants from the acceptance of presents beyond a trifling value. Under him, likewise, the grant of the duanie was obtained, while the trade in betel, opium, salt, and tobacco, was so regulated, that it ceased to be a snare to the junior functionaries, and became a monopoly in the hands of the seniors. Some advantage was doubtless obtained from it to the Company considered as duan, for duties were laid upon the several articles to the amount of £100,000 annually; but all beyond this went to enrich certain functionaries, of whom the governor himself was one. On the other hand, to the Emperor a yearly payment was promised of twenty-six lacs; to the Nabob an annuity of fifty lacs, while in the superintendence of his affairs, as well public as private, both Rajah Dooloob Ram and Juggeet Seat the Vakeel were associated with Mahommed Reza Cawn, the recognized Naib Duan. Moreover, Bulwant Sing, Zemindar of Benares and Gauzepoore, having joined the English in their struggle with the Nabob, was taken, as it were, under their protection, and in the restoration of his dominions to Shujah Dowlah the English became responsible for the safety of his vassal. I cannot, however, find that in the treaty of Allahabad any specific change in the nature of Bulwant Sing's position is effected. He is still dealt with as a zemindar, or great vassal of the Nabob of Oude;

and though secured against the vexations to which a desire of revenge on the part of his sovereign might have subjected him, nothing is said which exempts him from the pressure of such demands as in seasons of danger to the state, the state was accustomed to make on all the nobles and great men under the Musselman governments. Finally, the Emperor was left in possession of Allahabad and Corah; Shujah Dowlah was fined in sixty lacs for the expenses of the war; a treaty was formed by which the Company undertook, on his requisition, to supply him with a portion of their army, while he engaged to pay, as a remuneration for their services, at the rate of 115,000 lacs per mensem.

Of the efforts of Lord Clive to reduce the Company's military expenditure, of the mutiny which ensued, and the steps which were taken to suppress it, I have no concern. As little am I required to transcribe any sentences from his Lordship's correspondence, in which he congratulates the Directors on the brilliant prospects that were before them, and foretels a golden age for their newly acquired eastern empire. These were doubtless written in all sincerity, for Lord Clive was too able a politician to deal in promises of which he did not believe that some at least would be accomplished. But a little attention to the anomalous state into which matters were brought in the provinces, an acquaintance, however superficial, with

the sort of machinery which was to carry on the current business of the day, will be sufficient to satisfy every reflecting person that the realization of hopes thus excited was not only difficult but impossible. By the acquisition of the duanny the Company had become virtually the sovereign of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa. The Nabob had no longer the slightest control over the revenues of his country; he was a mere pensioner, and nothing more, on the bounty of his European masters. But it did not fall in with the received notions of the day to make these truths palpable to the world, and the Nabob continued, in consequence, to enjoy the state, and to keep up the character of an independent prince. Upon him, indeed, devolved the care of administering both civil and criminal justice throughout the soubahdary. It was in his courts, presided over by natives who professed to be guided in their proceedings by a traditionary law, that the injured cultivator, or weaver, or merchant came to seek redress against his oppressor; and how far he had a chance of obtaining it, in the event of the wrong having been perpetrated by a European or his agent, it is hardly necessary to state. For beyond the narrow circle of Calcutta and its dependencies, the control of the English government was not felt, and amid the wreck of the Nizamut, where the authority of the English government extended not,

the only check imposed upon the rapacity of Englishmen and their servants was to be found in the natural consciences of the former.

There was no such thing as justice, or law, or adequate protection to person or property any where in Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, except at Calcutta. The ancient courts had lost their influence, and the native magistrates were destitute of authority. In the collection and management of the revenue, likewise, the single rule observed appears to have been, to exact as much as possible from the occupants of the soil, without paying the slightest regard to their capabilities. For as yet Europeans shrank even from the responsibility of a general superintendence, and left everything to be managed by natives. "A resident," says the fifth report, "at the Nabob's court, who inspected the management of the Naib Duan, and the chief of Patna, who superintended the collections of the province of Bahar, under the immediate management of Shetab Roy, maintained an imperfect control over the civil administration of the districts included in the duanny grant;" but these gentlemen did not pretend to possess a sufficient knowledge of the civil institutions and the interior state of the country to qualify them for the trust, and so left the native collectors to be guided very much by their own discretion. Now without going so far as to accuse Mohammed Reza Cawn or Shetab Roy

of direct or systematic malversation, it would be strange indeed had they risen entirely above the temptations which assailed them ; while it is past dispute that giving them credit for the most unbending honesty, the difficulties of their position were of the very gravest kind. It is quite clear that the fiscal affairs of countries, of which the revenue is mainly derived from a tax upon the produce of the soil, must fall into confusion so soon as the cultivators are made to feel that the government either cannot or will not protect them; while trade must languish if it cease not altogether, where the strong are permitted to prey upon the weak. Such however was, in melancholy truth, the state into which the soubahdary had fallen, at the very moment when Clive was prophesying of the wealth which was by and bye to be gathered from it; and if even his vigorous arm and clear judgment so permitted things to be, there was slender room to hope for amelioration under his immediate successors.

Under the administration of Mr. Verelst, and his temporary successor, Mr. Cartier, the seeds of evil thus plentifully sown brought forth abundantly their legitimate fruit. There was not only no surplus revenue, wherewith to increase the dividends at home, but the profits of the duanny proved quite inadequate to cover the expenses of the local government. Bills were drawn to a

large amount upon the Court of Directors. The bullion sent from London for purposes of trade with China was in whole or in part appropriated, and the Company's investments sank to a degree which created both embarrassment and alarm in Leadenhall-street. Moreover, there was no war during several years to create an extraordinary pressure on the treasury, nor any other ostensible reason why the golden harvest which Clive had procured should not be reaped; yet from week to week, and from day to day, the Company's financial difficulties increased, till the attention both of the King's Government and of the country at large were forcibly drawn to them. I allude to the proceedings of 1767, both in parliament and elsewhere, out of which emanated the further enactments of 1769, 1772, and 1774: all of them important; all seeking one end; and some at least, if not all, eminently mischievous. It is not however at this stage of my narrative that I can pretend to speak of them in detail. As far as the management of affairs in Bengal were affected, their results amounted only to this: the authorities at Calcutta were forbidden to draw upon the Directors for a sum exceeding £70,000 in any one year; the monopoly of the salt trade, which had been secured to the senior servants, was broken down; European officers, called supervisors, were distributed through the country, to overlook the collection of

the revenue, and the administration of justice by the native functionaries; and at Moorshedabad and Patna two councils were established, with authority to check and control the proceedings of the supervisors. Finally, the supervisors were instructed to make themselves familiar with the history of their respective provinces; to inquire into "the state, produce, and capacity of the lands, the amount of the revenues, the cesses or arbitrary taxes, and of all demands whatsoever which were made on the cultivators; the manner of collecting them, and the gradual rise of every new import; the regulations of commerce, and the administration of justice."

The ultimate design of these arrangements was questionless to prepare the way for a wiser and better system of administration than had as yet been devised. Their immediate effect was certainly not to relieve either the local government or the Court of Directors from their embarrassments. Matters grew continually worse instead of better; while, as if to sum up the measure of evil, first war and then famine came like a scourge upon the provinces. It was in Bengal that the famine raged with such fury as to cut off in the course of one year full one third of the inhabitants: it was on the Company's settlements in the Carnatic that the war fell; and to these, for the present, I must turn the reader's attention.

MADRAS.

On the 10th of February, 1763, the treaty of Paris was ratified, by which the French, withdrawing from all pretence at political ascendency in the Deccan, secured the recognition of Salabut Jung as Soubahdar, themselves consenting to acknowledge Mohammed Ali as lawful Nabob of the Carnatic. It made no change in the spirit of the treaty, that Salabut Jung was already dethroned, and his brother, Bassalut Jung, reigning in his stead. The principle was fully acknowledged by it, that the endeavour to give both a Soubahdar to the Deccan, and a Nabob to the Carnatic, had been on the part of the French an unwise one; and that in all which seemed to be important to themselves the English were successful. Nevertheless, the fact that at a general treaty of peace, an Indian prince had been treated as a party consenting to such treaty, furnished ground for those to act upon, by whom the Company's privileges were regarded with disfavour; and by and bye it came to be gravely argued, both in the Cabinet and in the House of Commons, whether with the King and not in a mercantile body the right of keeping up diplomatic and other relations with the crowned heads of India was vested. Hence the appointment in 1770 of Sir John Linsay and Sir Thomas Harland as successive plenipotentiaries at the durbar of Mohammed Ali; as if Mohammed Ali had been

able to stand alone, independently of the support afforded him by the Company. At the same time it is worthy of remark, that this arrangement owed its origin, not to any deliberate conviction in the minds of the King's ministers, but to the unwearied and eminently successful intrigues of the Nabob himself. Oppressed with debts, both to the Company and to individuals, he ceased not, so soon as an opening was afforded, to labour at the consolidation of a party for himself among men of influence in London; and he so far succeeded, that but for the exercise of more than common firmness at Madras, great and serious evils might have overtaken the settlement. These, however, are matters with which I am no further concerned than that the allusions made to them in Hastings's correspondence shall be intelligible; for before he undertook the chief management of matters at Calcutta, that bubble had burst; and there was nothing in the experience of the issues in which it resulted which could tempt even party politicians to desire a repetition of the experiment.

In 1765, a phermaun was obtained from the Emperor Shah Allum, which made over to the Madras government the sovereignty of the northern Circars; a maritime district which had heretofore belonged to the soubahdary of the Deccan, and of which a portion was assigned by Nizam Ali in jaghire to his deposed brother Bassalut Jung.

The Soubahdar, or Nizam, as he is called by writers in general, resented this encroachment on his dignity, and composing some differences which had arisen between him and the Mahrattas, prepared to carry his arms into the Carnatic. But the English, not conceiving that they were strong enough to undertake the war, hastened to enter with him into a compromise. They agreed to become his renters in these provinces; to hold a body of troops in readiness; to settle, in everything, his highness's government; and to make him a present of five lacs of rupees, which they called upon the Nabob to furnish. The Nabob complained of this addition to his previous burdens, and found many, both at home and abroad, ready to coincide with him; yet there can be little doubt that, in a pecuniary point of view, he was the gainer by it: inasmuch as the ravages of war would have fallen entirely upon his country, and these were certainly not to be measured by any such scale as five lacs of rupees.

If the Madras government had not pledged themselves to furnish the Nizam with troops, their false step in diplomacy would have been of little moment, but the consequence of that inconsiderate pledge was to involve them almost immediately in war. Between the Nizam and Hyder Ali, by this time King of Mysore, there was a grudge; and the English were required to assist

the former in the reduction of Bangalore. I need not go into a detailed account of what followed. Hyder, a perfect master of diplomacy, soon detached the Nizam from his European alliance; after which the two Indian princes united their strength, and poured it into the Carnatic. The results were eminently disastrous both to the Nabob and the presidency. However superior the Company's troops might be, and however unvaried their success in battle, all the advantages, in a course of nearly two years' warfare, rested with their enemies. Hyder swept over the face of the country, rendering it a desert, and finally dictated his own terms at the very gates of Madras. These implied a restitution of conquests on both sides, the cession to Hyder of a narrow tract, which had formerly been cut off from Mysore, and last and worst of all, the assurance of mutual aid and alliance in case either of the contracting parties should be attacked from without. Now when it is considered that by the terms of separate treaty with the Nizam, the authorities at Fort St. George stood pledged to support him, on demand, with a specific amount of force, the excessive temerity of entering on such a compact with Hyder will be perceived, for Hyder and the Nizam were so circumstanced that a long continuance of amity between them was impossible, and in the event of a rupture, from which party could the

English keep aloof? Nevertheless, so desperate was the state of affairs in all quarters, and so great the anxiety of the home authorities, that peace even on such terms was considered preferable to a continuance of hostilities. The Directors blamed the local government severely, yet their own recorded proceedings distinctly show that peace they were resolved to have, let them make for it what sacrifices they would.

While such was the condition of the foreign relations in which the Madras government became involved, the internal state of the province, considered as a source of strength and emolument to the East India Company, proved to be even more unsatisfactory. So far from contributing to swell the amount of the dividends, the presidency of Fort St. George was compelled to seek aid both from Calcutta and elsewhere, for the purpose of meeting the heavy demands which the war imposed upon them. There was no regularity in the management of the investments; there was a positive loss both on the foreign and country trade; and the Directors became, not without reason, both anxious and alarmed. Under these circumstances it was determined to interfere with a vigorous hand, by bestowing upon a select committee the powers which had heretofore been wielded by the governor and council, and Mr. Hastings was gratified by finding that his merits were not over-

looked, nor his frequently expressed wish for responsible employment forgotten. With the general approbation of a full court, he was nominated to the important office of second in council at Fort St. George; the right of succession to the presidency so soon as the chair should become vacant, being secured to him, as well as a prominent place in the select committee, on the exertions of which so much reliance was placed.

While circumstances were thus working out for him, an avenue to further usefulness and distinction, Mr. Hastings was spending his time in that state of comparative obscurity which sets all research, after the lapse of half a century, at defiance, and leaves a biographer absolutely nothing to say. Of one event, however, I am enabled to make mention, which to him was the source of deep and lasting sorrow—I allude to the death of his son; who, after giving great promise of future excellence, died—I do not know where—of an ulcerated sore throat. Now, when I add that Mr. Hastings always delighted in the society of young people—that if he had a wish on earth more earnest than the rest, it was to bear the name and cherish the feelings of a parent—the extent of this privation will be far better understood than if I were to describe his grief as unappeasable. The truth, indeed, seems to be, that he never absolutely overcame it. His second marriage, however

fruitful in other sources of happiness, failed to supply him with this, and could not, therefore, teach him to forget that the blessing had for a long space been lent to him. And as the blow entirely overwhelmed him when it first fell, so months, and even years elapsed, ere he ceased to shrink from it. Mr. Hastings was told of his son's death almost the first thing after landing in England; and he carried the cloud on his brow throughout the entire period of his sojourn in this country.

An active mind like that of Mr. Hastings, however, though it may suffer acutely for a season, is not often permanently unhinged by misfortunes, against which there is no guarding. Mr. Hastings sought relief from this domestic affliction in such pursuits as were congenial to his habits. He gave free scope to his benevolence by showing kindness to those who had claims upon him, and in the society of men capable of appreciating the rare qualities of his mind, he found both instruction and amusement for his lighter hours. There is an expression in one of Dr. Johnson's letters, introduced by Boswell into his life of that great man, which seems to indicate that between Mr. Hastings and the moralist some intercourse at this time took place; and if Hastings were an associate, even at intervals, of the colossus of literature, it is extremely improbable that he failed to make the acquaintance of men inferior, no doubt, to

Johnson, but all of them eminent in their degree. Though, therefore, I have no documents beside me to prove the fact, I am ready to accept as true the statement of his anonymous biographers—that as an amusement "he applied himself to the cultivation of literature, and to the enjoyment of the society of men of genius."

He was thus circumstanced when that parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of India took place, with which I am only so far concerned as it bore, in its results, upon Hastings's future fortunes. As has already been shown, the evidence which he gave before the committee evinced such a thorough knowledge of his subject, that the hands of his original friends in the Direction were strengthened, and new patrons presenting themselves, he was nominated, as I have just related, to a high place in the government of Fort St. George.

The following are the terms, in the highest degree complimentary to Mr. Hastings, in which the Court of Directors made their representatives aware of the motives which induced them to give to the presidency of Fort St. George so experienced and gifted a councillor:—

"Mr. Warren Hastings, a gentleman who has served us many years upon the Bengal establishment with great ability and unblemished character, offering himself to be employed again in our

service, we have, from a consideration of his just merits, and general knowledge of the Company's affairs, been induced to appoint him one of the members of our Council at your presidency, and to station him next below Mr. Du Pre. He will proceed in one of the coast and bay ships, by which you will be advertised of such further directions as may be necessary concerning this appointment."

The rank in Council thus allotted to him determined also, in a great measure, the nature of the employment in which Mr. Hastings was expected to engage. Mr. Du Pre, it may be remembered, was at this time president, or first in Council, and on the second in Council devolved, as a matter of course, all the responsibilities of export warehouse keeper. Now with the export warehouse keeper it rested to superintend the Company's investments, to deal with the native contractors through whom the goods were supplied, and by the exercise of diligence and care in sorting the bales, previous to their shipment, to guard the proprietors at home against imposition. But one great ground of complaint in reference to Fort St. George was produced by the negligence with which this important duty had heretofore been discharged. The investments had not only failed, of late, in point of quantity, but the quality of the articles composing them was deteriorated; and Mr. Hastings had it especially in charge to inquire into the

causes of the evil, and to take such steps as he might judge expedient in order to prevent its recurrence. This, however, was not the only business, as well delicate as important, to which Mr. Hastings was directed in a marked manner to apply himself. Another letter from the Court, dated March 17, 1769, appoints a select committee, to consist of the governor, Mr. Warren Hastings, Brigadier General Joseph Smith, Mr. Bourchier, and Mr. Wynch, with full powers to pursue whatever means they might judge most proper for restoring peace to the Carnatic, settling all disputes with the Rajah of Tanjore, and causing the Nabob's debts, both to the Company and to individuals, to be put in a train for liquidation. Finally, the same letter empowers the select committee to examine into and correct abuses of every kind, particularly in the collection and management of the revenue, as to the method, execution, and propriety of the contracts for furnishing the army with all its requisites, and, besides looking into the affair of the investments, to detect abuses and to punish offenders. These were trusts which required, in the conduct of them, not merely firmness and integrity, but a sound and even a delicate discretion; because nothing is more unfair than to condemn, hastily, proceedings which custom may have in some measure sanctioned, on the plea that they will not stand the test of a rigid examination.

It is easy to collect, from the tone of Mr. Hastings's correspondence at this time, that his re-appointment to the Company's service gave him extreme satisfaction. Very few of his letters have, indeed, reached me, and these are all hurried compositions, some of them being devoted to the details of business, into which it is not necessary to enter. For it is a fact, that such was the embarrassed state of his affairs, that he found himself under the necessity of raising, by loan, the money that was required to cover the expenses of his outfit. Nevertheless he expresses himself on all occasions, even when setting forth his own necessities and urging his agents to use despatch in providing the means of their removal, like one who, being conscious of his own powers, is nowise distrustful of the future. Moreover, his perfect unselfishness makes itself apparent in the anxiety which he manifests to the last moment, that those who in some degree depended upon him for support should suffer no inconvenience from his departure. His aunt is well taken care of by a deed regularly executed; the expenses of his nephew's education are directed to be charged to his account, and other pensioners, whom it might be indelicate to particularize, are confirmed in the receipt of their annuities. In a word, the single being concerning whose private interests he seems at this period to have been indifferent, was himself.

Having completed all his arrangements, and put his baggage on board the Duke of Grafton, in the port of London, Mr. Hastings proceeded on the 23d of March to Dover, and immediately embarked. A hurried note, bearing date twelve o'clock, addressed to John Woodman, Esq., announces the fact, and as the temper of mind set forth even under its very common-place phraseology is characteristic, I am tempted to transcribe it :—

My dear Brother and Sister,—I am arrived safe, the pilot is just leaving us, and this is the last opportunity I shall have to write to you from this part of the world. A good apartment, less confusion and difficulty than I expected, a fair wind and most pleasant weather, are fine omens of a pleasant and prosperous voyage. Give my love to my dear Tom, my aunt, and all friends. Again receive my last wishes. May every blessing attend you, and a few years unite us again.

I cannot pretend to see in this letter anything more than the transcript of a temper generous and sanguine, and very kindly affectioned; yet I feel that I am in some sort bound to place it upon record, because the voyage, on the happy progress of which the writer counted so surely, was productive to him of results from which the whole web of his after life may be said to have taken its colouring. I trust that my motives for dwelling lightly on the matter in question will not be misunderstood. The breath of censure never, as far as

I know, fell upon the good name of either party, that is to say, I never heard that there existed in any quarter so much as a suspicion of criminality between them; but we are in this country, and wisely so, stern moralists where the marriage tie is affected, and do not, therefore, recognize as consonant with God's law the facilities of divorce which in the Protestant states of Germany are afforded. I trust, therefore, that I shall be excused if I confine myself strictly to an account of the leading facts of the case as they occurred, while to the good feelings of my readers I leave it to deal as tenderly as they can with a matter which, if tried by the rigid test of moral right, will not, I am afraid, admit of the shadow of an excuse.

Mr. Hastings found among his fellow passengers in the Duke of Grafton two individuals, with whom he soon entered into terms of familiar intercourse. These were Baron Adam Carl Imhoff, a native of Franconia, in Germany, a man of good family, though reduced in his circumstances, who was going out to Madras for the purpose of following there the profession of a portrait painter, and his lady, a person of singularly attractive manners, of a very engaging figure, and a mind highly cultivated. It was not my good fortune to become acquainted with Mrs. Hastings till the last shadows of old age had fallen upon her; and we are seldom able to determine with accuracy, if we see them for the

first time in so dim a light, how either men or women may have comported themselves when they were young. Yet I can testify that even then she was no ordinary woman; while they who knew her better and had other and more extensive opportunities of judging, assure me, that long after she had passed the period of middle life, she was altogether fascinating. It so happened that between this gifted young person and her husband there was no conformity at all either of tastes or of disposition. On neither side, I believe, could any grievous faults be charged, and he, especially, in his own rude way, was kind to her; but their union was one of those against which nature vehemently protests, and which are never contracted without entailing on the ill-fated pair long years of discomfort, if not of positive misery. Let me not, however, linger over a subject, even to glance at which necessarily involves both the reader and the writer in difficulties. If persons circumstanced as were the Baron and Baroness Imhoff are permitted to pass through life without encountering those towards whom the deeper springs of their affections are instinctively attracted, it is well for them. They may never know what happiness is, but, at least, they will escape its opposite. Should the contrary fate be theirs, then more than human strength is necessary to hinder them from yielding to an impulse which must, of necessity, render the cup of their domestic

existence more bitter than ever. Strong principle and a just sense of religion will, indeed, save them from crime, but woe to the heart into which the iron has fairly entered; there is no chance of rest or peace for it except in the grave.

Between the Baroness Imhoff, such as I have described her, the wife of one whom she had never loved, and Mr. Hastings, one of the most fascinating as well as chivalrous men of his day, it would have been strange if a friendship had failed to arise, which gradually, and to themselves, perhaps, unconsciously, took from day to day a deeper colouring. For she discovered in him all the qualities, the absence of which hindered her from giving her heart where she had bestowed her hand, while he found in her more than the realization of the brightest dream which his imagination had ever ventured to form. Moreover, as if it had been God's will to try the strength of their principles to the utmost, Mr. Hastings was seized with a dangerous illness during the voyage, throughout the whole of which she nursed him with a sister's care, watching by his bed-side often when he knew it not, and administering to him all his medicines with her own hand. I repeat, that I never heard so much as an insinuation hurtful to the honour of either party. They were both too high-minded to inflict on a husband an injury which never can be repaired; but they were not firm enough to hold

out against the strong temptation which the laws of Protestant Germany, in reference to the marriage contract, cast in their way. Mr. and Mrs. Imhoff lived together, with good repute, a whole year in Madras. They acted upon the same wise and judicious plan after they followed Mr. Hastings to Bengal. Yet all this while a suit was going forward in the proper courts of Franconia for a divorce. The divorce was obtained after much delay; the Baroness Imhoff became Mrs. Hastings, and the Baron returned to his native country a richer man than he ever could have hoped to become by the mere exercise of his skill as a painter.

Before I quit this part of my subject, I think it right to state that a union more productive than this of perfect happiness to both parties has never been contracted. I have read almost all the letters that Mr. Hastings at various times addressed to his wife; and, from the first to the last, I can find no decline there; they breathe throughout a spirit of devoted attachment, such as I have rarely seen equalled, such as could not be surpassed. Moreover, Mrs. Hastings's children, for she had two sons by her first marriage, became immediately to Mr. Hastings as if they had been his own. One of these was unfortunate, and died early, but the other, the present Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Imhoff, still lives to speak of Mr. Hastings as of a parent whose tenderness and care

will never pass from his grateful recollection till memory cease to do its office.

I return now to the more dry details of Hastings's public history; from which we learn that he arrived at Fort St. George without the occurrence of any accident, and that, having taken the oaths as well as his seat at the council-board, he was immediately, with the governor and the rest of the gentlemen specified in the Court's letter, appointed to act as a select committee. Some portion of the business which the Directors had entrusted to the committee's management was indeed already completed. There was peace in the Carnatic, purchased no doubt at a very heavy cost, yet beneficial, on the whole, to the Company's interests; while with the Rajah of Tanjore a negociation had been opened, from which satisfactory results were expected by and bye to flow. But all the questions touching the settlement of the Nabob's debts, as well as the means of introducing an improved system into the management of the investments, still remained open, and to these the committee addressed themselves. I do not find that, in reference to the former of these points, Mr. Hastings took any prominent part. His opinions seem to have concurred with those of his colleagues in general, and with them he laboured so to arrange matters as that, giving a preference to the Company over individuals from whom the Nabob had borrowed, they

might yet secure to all the prospect of an equitable adjustment of their accounts. The case, however, is different as regards the arrangement of an improved plan for providing the investments, and rendering them profitable when provided. Of this the merit belongs exclusively to Mr. Hastings; and I therefore conceive that I am bound, at the hazard of fatiguing wherever I may fail to instruct, to explain matters so that the grounds on which he secured the approbation of his employers at this time may become apparent.

The investments from the Carnatic, or, to speak more accurately, the most valuable portions of them, consisted at that time: first, of manufactured goods—of silks and cottons woven in the piece; and next, of the cocoons of the silk-worms, or the thread itself, wound off and made ready for the use of the manufacturer at home. In providing these it had heretofore been the custom to contract with certain native merchants, who having engaged to furnish no more than a specified amount of each article, and being left to make with the growers and the weavers their own bargain, were paid according to the quality as well as quantity of the goods sent in by them to the Company's warehouses. Now if the superintendence exercised over the proceedings of these native contractors had been sleepless, and such, in other respects, as the nature of the transaction required,

though the poor weavers and growers might have suffered wrong, the Company at least would have been protected from imposition. But the very reverse was the case.

The contractors, after cheating the ryots—a class of men whose abject poverty keeps them in constant bondage to the money-lender—so packed their bales as to exact for the worst qualities of goods prices which had been promised only for the best, while they whose duty it was to guard against the perpetration of the wrong, partly through ignorance, partly through the lack of attention, suffered it, season after season, to pass unnoticed. For the custom of the service was to confer the office of export warehouse keeper on one whose duties as second in council were of themselves sufficiently onerous to occupy the whole of his time; while he had as his assistants the youngest servants of the Company—mere lads, who, having just arrived, knew nothing about the matter, and were too well assured of a speedy removal to higher employment ever to think of reforming themselves. The obvious consequences were, an oppression upon the weavers which grew heavier every season, till by and bye it threatened to paralyze them altogether; and a progressive deterioration in the worth of the goods exported, from the sale of which in the London market the

proprietors of India stock counted on receiving their dividends.

To remedy these evils, and by so doing to confer substantial benefits on the native population, as well as on his employers, Mr. Hastings recommended the adoption of the following expedients: He advised that the office of export warehouse keeper should thenceforth become separate and distinct in itself; that a gentleman skilled in the trade and manufactures of the country should be appointed to fill it; and that he should be assisted in his labours by a body of clerks from whom both diligence and a thorough knowledge of details should be required. With respect again to the mode of remunerating these functionaries, Mr. Hastings suggested that they should be allowed a per-centage on the goods sold in the country—for which it was certain that the demand would become continually greater in proportion to the increased and increasing wealth of the native population. Moreover, the whole system of contracts, including the profits of the middle man or native merchant, was to be set aside. Both in the Carnatic and elsewhere, the manufactures were then, and are still, carried on in villages—all, or almost all, the inhabitants of which find subsistance by working at the loom; while of the villages themselves a certain number used at that period to

be comprehended in a district, for the produce of which the native merchant or contractor engaged with the Company. Mr. Hastings recommended that the whole of this machinery should be abolished, and that persons employed immediately by the export warehouse keeper should pay periodical visits to the manufacturing villages, and on the spot make arrangements with the chiefs or head men of those villages for the investments. At the same time it was his opinion that the Company ought to limit its corporate dealings to a certain number of these villages, taking a pledge from the societies thus favoured that they would work for no private masters, while with the proceedings of the rest they no further concerned themselves than by extending to the ryots in all their transactions the ordinary protection of the law. Such, in few words, is the substance of a plan which I find laid down at great length in a minute by Mr. Hastings, bearing date the 7th of December, 1771, and which, having been unanimously approved of, both at Fort St. George and in London, was in due time carried into execution, very much to the benefit both of the native manufacturer and the European purchaser.

To complete his own scheme and bring it into operation, while at the same time he took his share in the current business of the settlement, gained for Mr. Hastings both occupation and honour till

the end of December, 1771. It was then notified to him, both from Europe and Calcutta, that the Directors, as a mark of their high approbation, had nominated him to the place of second in council at Bengal, with the assurance that so soon as Mr. Cartier should retire, it was their wish that he should take upon himself the charge of the government. Many reasons combined to render this arrangement peculiarly acceptable to the object of it. In the first place, it opened to his ambition—the great ruling yet well regulated passion of his soul—a far wider and more important field than that which the Carnatic could afford. In the next place, Mr. Hastings seems always to have cherished a strong yet natural partiality for the scene of his early labours; and last of all, there appeared to be a better chance of acquiring a competency in the very highest than in any other and subordinate situation in the service of the Company. And though there never lived a man so indifferent as Warren Hastings to money, considered as such, and of course to the means of its accumulation, still all his habits were such as to render the possession of at least a moderate fortune necessary to his very existence. Nevertheless, he could not contemplate without some regret the prospect of removing from a position in which he had the satisfaction to know that he had performed good service to the public, without

exciting towards himself one angry feeling in the breasts of individuals. He was not, indeed, blind to the many errors in policy of which both his immediate colleagues and their predecessors had been guilty. But he felt for the extraordinary difficulties of their situation, and would have freely shared it with them, had such been the will of his superiors. The following series of letters, indicative of these sentiments, I insert, not without some little apprehension in my own mind that they contain allusions which to the uninformed reader may appear obscure, if not unmeaning. At the same time, as I cannot undertake to give in this place a general history both of India and of England, I must presume something on the previous acquaintance with these subjects of all who are likely to take an interest in the life of Warren Hastings; I therefore give the letters as I find them, in the order of their dates, and without one word of note or comment.

To Mr. and Mrs. WOODMAN.

Fort St. George, 30th January, 1771.

My dear Brother and Sister,—I am at this time busied in preparations for leaving this settlement, and repairing to my new residence; may it prove as easy, as comfortable, as this has been, but more profitable, I hope. I have only time to inform you that I have cased a pipe of old Madeira, and ordered it to be sent to England in the first ship, directed to you. I beg you will divide it with Mrs. Hancock; it will last you both, I hope, till I can send another, for your families

are but small, and consume but little wine in the year. You will be informed by my attorneys in what ship it goes.

I shall make another remittance of money, sufficient to discharge the remainder of my debts; but I am not yet sure of the amount; that, too, Mr. Woodman will learn from my attorneys.

I cannot answer your letters, for I am at a distance from them. I remember they told me you were all well; that Tommy was become a great scholar, and my niece a most thriving and fine child; indeed, I have letters that speak wonders of her accomplishments. May every year bring me the same glad tidings; I wish not for better, and would compound for many a misfortune to be sure of such an annual present. I leave this place in health and in spirits, except what I feel in parting from it. Accept the repeated assurance of my affection, of my warmest wishes for your long, long continued happiness, my dearest brother and sister, aunt, Tommy, Bessy; may God bless and protect you is the prayer of your most affectionate.

To FRANCIS SYKES, Esq.

Fort St. George, 30th January, 1772.

Dear Sykes,—I have not time, as you may well imagine, for a long letter, but hope for more leisure in my passage to Bengal, and more composed thoughts. I am now taking leave of this place, and shall embark the 2nd, in the morning Yet I would not lose the first occasion to tell you how much joy it has given me to learn that I am much indebted to you for my late appointment. How sensibly I feel the obligation I cannot tell you; but you are the friend you have always professed yourself, and you shall always find me your most warm and hearty friend. I leave this place in actual peace, and likely to continue so for a

couple of years to come; what will afterwards follow God knows. It will depend more on the measures from home than in what can be done here. I am happy in leaving Mr. Du Pré still in the chair. I hope the Directors will encourage him to continue in it. His abilities are very great, and if equalled by any quality it is by his unwearied assiduity and application.

I have sent you one pipe of Madeira; I forget by what ship. You will receive another by one of the two next. Old wine and the pipe cased. My attorney will inform you by what ship it goes. Adieu. Believe me most sincerely and affectionately your obliged friend.

To Lord SHELBURNE.

Fort St. George, 31st January, 1772.

My Lord,—The enclosed is a duplicate of a letter which I had the honour to address to your Lordship some months ago. The Court of Directors have since been pleased to confer upon me the government of their possessions in Bengal,—an honour equally unsolicited and unexpected on my part. By whatever means it has fallen to my lot, there is a degree of confidence implied in the manner of it, which claims a more than ordinary share of my attention to the very weighty affairs of that presidency. You will permit me to say, my Lord, that you have furnished an additional motive to my ambition, in the desire which I feel to merit the good opinion which your Lordship has already been pleased to express of me.

This letter will be conveyed to your Lordship, as my last was, by the means of W. M'Pherson. Had it been my fortune to remain in this place, I should have sought for some means of doing him service. Your recommendation, and his own merit, and useful talents, would have entitled him to my best offices. But I fear I have no better proof of my friendship left to show him

than my good wishes. Allow me, my Lord, to repeat the assurances which I have already expressed of my desire to receive your commands, and of the great respect with which I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant.

To Mrs. Hancock.

Fort St. George, 31st January, 1772.

My dear Madam,—I reserve to myself the pleasure of replying at large to your letters during the time of my voyage, which will afford me both leisure and composure of mind. I am obliged to borrow from the hours of sleep this opportunity of telling you that I shall leave this place in health and in confidence of future success. I shall embark the 2nd of next month, in the morning. I feel a regret at parting from the people of this settlement, having lived with much comfort among them; and am flattered with the assurance that I shall leave more who are sorry than who are glad that they lose me. My associates at the Council Board deserve, and will ever have, my kindest remembrance, for I never did business with men of so much candour, or in general of better disposition. I doubt whether I shall really profit by the change, but either my pride, or partial attachment to Bengal, makes me much pleased with it.

I have recommended the little Watson to the protection of Sir Robert Fletcher, who has promised to be kind to him.

I have cased a pipe of old Madeira, which was spared to me as a favour, and left it under charge of my attorney, to be sent by the Lord North to Mr. Woodman, and I have desired him to share it with you. I hope it will prove acceptable to you, and that you will not be displeased at my choosing this manner of conveying it, as I consider your two families as

united, and it will prove a store sufficient for both till I can send another. I shall also desire the captain to take three pieces of chintz, being the first trial made of painting on dooruars.

I have the satisfaction to inform you that my fortune is not worse than it was when I came here; I am not certain that it is better. The best part of it is gone to Bengal, where I hope it has been employed to a good account. My going there shall be attended with one useful effect, for I am determined on bringing our concerns to some sort of a conclusion. I shall not have the difficulties which Mr. Wancock had to encounter, nor he neither perhaps now. I hear he is thoroughly well, though he sometimes talks of his old fever, the gout; and my health has held out amazingly, though I seldom stir from town. I attribute much to the dry air of Madras, but more to temperance, which necessity has now rendered almost habitual to me.

Kiss my dear Bessy for me, and assure her of my tenderest affection. May the God of goodness bless you both.

Before I close my letter let me gratify my present feeling by telling you that great as my obligations have been to you, you have increased them by a recent and disinterested instance of your friendship for me in your last letter. My next shall remind you of the subject. Till then, adieu, my dear and ever-valued friend. Remember me, and make my Bessy remember and love her godfather and her mother's sincere and faithful friend.

To Sir GEORGE COLEBROOKE, Bart.

Fort St. George, 1st February, 1772.

Sir,—Mr. Stuart has informed me how greatly I am indebted to you for my late appointment. I have also heard the same from other hands. I am poor in

expressions of thanks, but I can assure you I feel as I ought this fresh instance of your confidence. It shall be my most earnest study to merit it. Let me entreat you, Sir, to continue to me the same support. I feel too sensibly the weak ground on which my interest stands, unless supported by the most wary conduct in the administration of the very weighty affairs entrusted to my charge; and I know too well both the proneness which people in general have to misrepresent the actions of those in authority, and too great readiness with people at home to credit implicitly such misrepresentations. It is impossible to avoid errors; and there are cases in government in which it may be necessary to adopt expedients which are not to be justified on such principles as the public can be the judges of.

While the general tenor of my conduct shall show that I have the good of the Company at heart, and that I neglect no part of my duty, I shall hope that no little defects shall be noticed, no interests of other expectants, nor the want of personal interest in myself, will be the means of depriving me of the favour of my employers, and the just rewards of my service. Hitherto I have received from you patronage, protection, and countenance; and little as I may be entitled to these advantages, they will no longer content me, I look up to your friendship. Permit me to say, Sir, that I claim it, and even for your own sake. Without powerful and effectual friends, I cannot hope to answer the expectations of those to whose opinion merely I owe my present advancement; and the credit of your choice must depend on the success of the man on whom it has fallen.

My mind is at this time too much disturbed by the business of my departure, and continual interruption, to admit of my replying as I would wish, by this conveyance, to your letters. This I must beg leave to

defer to the leisure which I am likely to have in my voyage; and my next letter will probably reach you, within a very short time, as soon as this. I shall add to it but one subject. The acquisition of an officer of Sir Robert Fletcher's distinguished merit and active spirit has given great joy to the gentlemen who compose this administration. There have been some circumstances, however, which have made him very uneasy in his situation, and in the distance of his prospects to the chief command. From the length of time that Sir Robert Barker has had the command in Bengal, it may be concluded that the Court of Directors may have formed some thoughts of naming a successor to him. I wish not anything to the prejudice of those who stand next in the line of succession, if their abilities shall be thought equal to the trust. But there are surmises that interest is making for the appointment of others not on the list. In such a case I cannot help expressing my wish that Sir Robert Fletcher may be the man. I do not presume on the short acquaintance with which you have honoured me, either to recommend or solicit favours. But I may with propriety urge as an argument, that it most essentially concerns the service, that the person who is in the chief administration of affairs, should have a confidence in the officer who is at the head of the forces. Sir Robert Fletcher's reputation is very high in Bengal and in the provinces beyond it; and I have been, in some respect, a witness of the spirit and conduct by which he distinguished himself in the short time that he had the command there; short as it was, it was sufficient for the conquest of the province of Oude. I shall not add more on this subject; you will be so good as to excuse me, if you think I have said more than enough. I must sincerely wish that you may long continue to direct the administration of the Company's affairs; and am, with

the greatest esteem, Sir, your most obliged and most obedient servant.

To Mr. Du Pre.

Fort St. George, 31st January, 1772.

Sir,—I had the honour to address a letter to you by the means of his Excellency the Nabob, to inform you of my appointment to the Government of the Company's affairs in Bengal, and that I should shortly leave this place and proceed to my allotted station. Having performed the duties of respect in that address, permit me, Sir, now to indulge the sentiments of my heart, in expressing the personal concern which I feel in losing, with your presence, the hopes which I had conceived of being admitted to a share of your confidence and friendship. The distance to which I shall shortly be removed, almost wholly deprives me of so pleasing a prospect, at the same time that it furnishes me with the means of offering you this declaration of my esteem, without hazarding the imputation or suspicion of flattery.

I hope still to be honoured with a place in your remembrance as a person who would have esteemed it a happiness to have devoted his best services to the support of your welfare. I on my part shall never forget the many instances which I have received of your kindness, nor yet the very great and amiable qualities which eminently distinguished your character, especially the sincerity and candour of your expressions, and the gentleness of your manners. These are virtues which in private life will always command love and respect; but in persons of your elevated sphere are the best endowments in the gift of heaven, and the source of blessings to mankind.

May the Almighty keep you in his protection, and bless you with a long life of accumulated honour and

felicity. I have the honour to be, Sir, your devoted and faithful servant.

To LAURENCE SULIVAN, Esq., per Lord Holland.

Bay of Bengal, 10th February, 1772.

Dear Sir,—My last was dated the 30th January, and was left to go by the Lord North packet. I shall now reply to your favours of the 28th January, 30th April, (as I judge from a reference in your next, for it has no date), 8th May, and 12th June, 1771 The first of these was delivered to me by Mr. Kirkham; I told him how earnestly you had bespoke my good offices towards him, and expressed my regret that I saw no probable means of affording him any service, as his destination and mine were so remote.

Your sentiments with respect to General Coote's powers, though such as I expected, afforded me great satisfaction. May success and honour attend him in any other part of the world, but God forbid that he should ever return to any part of India again.

I shall have little occasion hereafter, I hope none, to introduce the Nabob of Arcot into my letters. I shall be as concise as possible in what I may now have to say concerning him. Your wish to bring about a reconciliation between him and Hyder is equally consistent with sound policy, and the friendship which you bear him; but you may be assured that it is not possible. The Nabob is implacable, and all his political projects contribute to make him, were he not so already, the enemy of Hyder.

The encouragement given him by His Majesty's ministers, and the opinion of his interest with the Company, have not only given him hopes of an entire independency, but have enabled him to pursue the most dangerous projects with impunity. The perseverance in his rage for an alliance with the Mahrattas, and the favourable disposition lately shown by him

towards the French, his new allies by the new construction of the treaty of Paris, are well worthy of your attention. While he is allowed to guide all the public measures in which the Company have an equal risk, and which their power must support, and whilst he is assured of the protection of the Crown, and the countenance of the Directors against the acts of the government of Fort St. George, you are not to hope for any benefit in his alliance. Perpetual disputes will arise between him and your servants, whom he will study by every artifice to draw into his measures; measures which have but one object, the establishment of his own independency on the ruin of the Company's and the national influence. You will not always have men of equal firmness and ability to the present governor; nor of equal candour and integrity to the present members of your Council, to oppose his schemes. If these are allowed to continue, they will infallibly end either in a total separation of his interests from the Company's, or in the total deprivation of his authority; or in the ruin of both. I shall use no arguments to prove this, nor for saying that the greatest proof that you can give the Nabob (who, doubtless, will not receive it as such) of your real friendship for him, will be to restore him to that state of confidence in the Company, and union with them, which subsisted for so many years, till broken by higher connexions; by empowering your representatives to assume the lead in all such of their common transactions with him as may materially affect the interests of the Company, by authorizing them to reserve for the Company a share in every acquisition made by their arms; by establishing a more equitable proportion of the expense to be defrayed by each for the support of the country, by taking the jagheer into your own hands, that you may have the necessaries of life at your command; (and

which ought to have been first named, for without it all else you do will be in vain;) by the final recall of His Majesty's Minister, and the everlasting abolition of all intervention between the King and the Nabob but that of the Company. Volumes might be written upon these subjects; but your judgment and experience will furnish you with all the reasons on which my opinions are grounded. I fear to enter on so copious an argument.

I received the warmest assurances of the Nabob's friendship, on parting from him, and on my expressing a regret that I should be separated from him before I had had an opportunity of convincing him of my attachment, he did me the honour to declare that he thought himself obliged to me for the moderating part which I had acted in many instances of the debates between him and the committee, and that he was entirely satisfied with *every* part of my conduct. This was too honourable a testimony for me to receive with a safe conscience, but I can with an unblemished one affirm that I never opposed any interest to his, but that of my employers. I dare appeal to Mr. Bourchier for his opinion of the temper which he perceived in my behaviour to the Nabob during the short interval of his government.

I am very glad that you showed my letter to Sir George Colebrooke, since it must have proved that the advice imputed to you was totally without foundation, as it was scarce possible that you should have desired the Nabob to place such an improper reliance on me, without communicating to me that you had done it. I did not think myself at liberty to mention this circumstance to Mr. Du Pré, though I wish I could have had his explanation upon it. He is of a disposition susceptible of jealousy. It is almost the only defect I know in his character; but I cannot help persuading

myself that in this particular instance his expressions, whatever they may have been, have been reported to you with exaggerations. I have made it a point to act with the strictest honour on all occasions with him, and have every reason to believe he was entirely satisfied with my conduct. I told him of every letter which I received from you to be delivered to the Nabob. It was a point of duty which I thought I could not dispense with. I saw no reason to affect a mystery in the delivery of them, and it was not in my power, had I been disposed to it, to have concealed them from his knowledge. I have reasons of the last importance to desire that this may not be communicated. It is not from your letters that the Nabob derives his great support and importance. He has other correspondents, and other means of communication, by which he acquires the knowledge of many transactions, and of things intended to be transacted, which I am sure you would wish him to be ignorant of. He has agents too in this colony, who inflame his jealousy of our government, feed his resentments with every rascally tale that the idle conversation of the settlement can furnish them with, and assist him in his literary polemics, for such his letters of the last two years may be truly called. A very powerful bias to politics, and a most unconquerable aversion to those who have more power than themselves, have gained the Nabob a formidable party in the Scottish inhabitants of this colony, who to a man almost are partisans of the Nabob, or discontented with the government.

I fear that my letter may have done me no service with Sir George Colebrooke, for there were some passages in it which might have given him offence, and I have had an intimation given me from a friend in England, that I was not sufficiently communicative to him; I rely on your good offices to impress him with

sentiments of kindness and confidence towards me. I shall want much more than the feeble support which I may be entitled to from the bare consideration of the public service. My friends must be such from inclination. Such a friendship I have experienced from you, and I hope to receive this additional proof of it.

I cannot pass your very friendly congratulations on my late appointment without stopping to repeat my thanks to you for this fresh instance of your benevolence to me. I am yet unacquainted with the means by which this very unexpected change in my fortune was brought about; but I know it had all the help that your influence could give it, and I am sure no one received more satisfaction from its success. Pardon me, if I express myself with presumption. I speak my entire belief, and my feelings are consonant to it. I hope I shall never discredit your partial opinion of me. Let me receive the support which the consciousness of my own sentiments entitles me to lay claim to, and I will merit it.

I received with, I believe, equal joy the news of your return to the direction, though it was what I had some time expected, and I was the more pleased as you came in single. I fear I express myself more on this occasion like a servant of the Company than the friend of Mr. Sulivan, but I flatter myself that in the end you will be equally satisfied with it, as I suppose that your superior knowledge and long practice in the Company's affairs are the most likely means to give you that ascendant which you formerly possessed in the administration of them.

I have but a word to say to your recommendations, which is, to assure you that they shall be most punctually complied with. I fear Miss Sanders, if she thought it worth a reflection, may have suspected me of inattention to her in the short stay which she made at

Madras. I did see her, and should have been happy to have contributed to make the place more agreeable to her, had I not been prevented by the awkwardness of my situation with respect to Colonel Wood, in whose family she lived.

Your letter of the 5th May, relating to the affairs of Bengal only, I cannot at this time reply to. I shall pay strict attention to it when the points alluded to shall come in the course of business before me. I shall be sorry to begin my new office with retrospections, but you have enjoined it, and I shall set aside every consideration but that of obedience to the commands, the first commands of my employers.

In the attention paid by the Court of Directors to the improvement of their investments, I feel a secret satisfaction and assurance that the diligence which I have used to bring that branch of their concerns to a state of perfection in the Carnatic will receive their approbation. Gomastahs have been established in the principal manufacturing towns of the Jagheer, and new regulations formed for every process of the investment, which I hope will be found to be such as to promise both immediate and lasting success to it. The prices of the fine goods have been exceedingly reduced, and all, I believe, will be found much improved in their quality, and in the way to receive greater improvements. The buyers, too, will find their account in the sorting which is performed by professed sorters. I believe the Lord North will carry home the first bales that have gone from Madras for the last thirty years with goods of equal assortments.

I have desired Mr. Smith who has succeeded me, to send you a copy of a minute delivered in to the Board, with other papers which will give you a clear explanation of the whole system. I entreat you to read them, and that you will give yourself the trouble to examine

the goods, and to make the comparison between them and those formerly provided by the merchants. I have desired that a comparative account of each may be transmitted to the Court of Directors with the invoice.

I am much pleased with Mr. Stuart. He is a sensible man, and appears to possess a good temper. I hope to benefit by the assistance which he is certainly capable of affording me, especially as he is destined to succeed to that station in which I shall most want a man of ability. At the same time that I receive a satisfaction in the choice of the Court of Directors having fallen on so fit a man for their secretary in Bengal, I cannot avoid remarking that the precedent is very dangerous. There will always be found men of abilities in the service, acquainted at the same time with all the official forms, which kind of knowledge a man from England cannot well possess, and it is of the greatest utility in the despatch of business. It has been always the practice for the governor to make choice of the new secretary on every vacancy, a privilege in which the Council have rarely interfered, and the reason is that the secretary is not so much the assistant of the Council as of the governor, who is the only responsible person for the execution of the resolution of the Board, and ought to be satisfied with the person on whom his credit must so much depend.

Your choice of Mr. Stuart will do credit to the Directors, and I have reason to hope will be well received in Bengal But if it is once made the rule that this appointment is to be filled from England, may not men without abilities and without integrity, in time find means through mere interest to obtain it? May not men of dangerous connexions thus become possessed of all the secret transactions of your government? May not the spirit of emulation of your own servants suffer by these supercessions, and many who want but

such an office to display the most useful talents, be lost to the service, and exert themselves only in the pursuit of private gain? We were alarmed the last year with the report that Mr. Stuart was actually designed for Madras, and to be immediately employed as secretary there. Mr. Scrafton too, a little before I left England, told me that he believed Dow would be sent out to Madras with the appointment of Persian translator. Good God, what an injury would have been done to two of the most valuable servants that ever filled those employs, Goodlad and Stracey! What an injury to the governor, to the service, in the loss of such assistants! It is not so with the accountant's office. This I wish to have always supplied from England. It requires talents of a particular kind with much practice, and ought to be as little exposed to change as possible. One very good reason I have heard given for sending persons from England for both offices, which is, that they are the least lucrative of any employs in the service, to which the Company's servants of any rank or character can aspire, and therefore are not worth the acceptance of those whose abilities entitle them to more advantageous places. This is too true, but you may depend upon it that the governor will always choose the fittest man that he can get for secretary, and the pride of distinction and the hope of future promotion will operate more forcibly on the minds of young men of real merit than present gains. It is not wholly the fault of those who have had the administration of your affairs abroad that the emoluments attached to the several employs are not proportioned to the labour or importance of the duties annexed to them. This has introduced another evil by causing profitable employs to be joined with such as are more laborious, but have no advantages, and of course the former are often entirely neglected. Thus my late employ of export ware-

house keeper, a trust of much hazard, and much trouble, afforded me a profit of about 1300 pagodas in two years during the time I held it. The office of commissary general was a mere sinecure (indeed I had an excellent man for my deputy), and for that I received a monthly gratuity of 100 pagodas. I mention this not so much to support the argument with which I introduced this subject, as to show the necessity of making the rewards of the service generally more adequate to the duties of it, in which respect I am told the establishment in Bengal is more defective than any other. Nothing animates diligence in the same degree, or gives equal vigour and despatch to public business, as emoluments depending on the attention which is bestowed on it. At the same time nothing is so difficult to discover as the means of applying this useful maxim to the various branches of the service. I hope I have proved that it may be done in the new arrangements which have been made in the export warehouse, and the proceedings of the committee of works will afford other instances of it in the appointment of Mr. Desvoeux and Mr. Barnard. The former is agent for providing bricks, the latter for chunam, two articles of much importance both to the Company and the inhabitants. I could wish to refer you to the minutes containing the grounds and regulations for both these appointments, for the same principles will be productive of the same effects in others of the first importance. But I am ashamed to have already laid claim to so unreasonable a share of your attention in the resources which I have already recommended to you, and in the length of this letter; foreseeing too that I shall have occasion to give you more trouble by the despatch that shall carry this to you. I shall hasten, therefore, to bring it to a conclusion.

I left Madras the second of this month, and am at

this instant about half way in my passage to Bengal. If you find this letter very tedious, or any part of it not very intelligible, be so good as to lay it to the account of an uneasy stomach and confused head, the inseparable companions of a sea life in a small vessel.

Wishing you health, fortune, power, and every thing that can contribute to your honour and happiness, I am, dear sir, your obliged and faithful humble servant.

To Sir G. COLEBROOKE, per Lord Holland.

Bay of Bengal, 15th February, 1772.

Sir,—I have now the pleasure to reply to your favours of the 14th January, 4th May, and 4th June, 1771. The first of these was sent to me from Bengal by Mr. Fowke, whom I shall study to serve as far as it lies in my power. I am much pleased with Mr. Stuart. He may depend upon every mark of friendship that I can show him, and I promise myself great benefit from his abilities. I am happy at the same time that your recommendations of him, his connexions, and the knowledge which I before had of his character, authorize me to place that degree of confidence in him which I could not have given to a mere stranger. I wish, on many accounts, that he may long continue in the office destined for him. Pardon me, Sir, if I mention as one motive for this wish, my fear that his place may not be supplied by one whom I shall like so well. There are many reasons which require that the accountant should be nominated by the Court of Directors, and fixed to his station. He is responsible for the business of his office; the president for that of the secretary, who is only his assistant, and ought to be one on whom he can depend. I beg you will not receive this intimation as proceeding from any dislike of the past measure; I am afraid from some instances which have fallen under my own observation, there was a

necessity for it, but as an objection which occurs to the general rule which you, the Court of Directors have adopted, of sending out persons to succeed to this post. There are others equally strong which I forbear to mention.

You may depend upon my attention to the improvement of the Company's finances, as far as it can be effected without encroaching on their future income. It might be an useful policy to force as large a present revenue from the country as it could yield, if I had no other view than to establish a temporary interest, and to quit my station as soon as I could attain the purpose of completing my own fortune. But such a conduct would be but an ill return to the confidence which the Court of Directors have placed in me, and I see expressions in your letter which assure me that so pernicious a principle would justly excite your resentment. The provinces have suffered much by the late calamities which have greatly hindered its cultivation and manufacture, and lessened the number of its inhabitants. Under such circumstances the revenue will require much management and a very gentle hand. If I am rightly informed, more is to be done by economy than can possibly be effected by enlarging the collections. But I speak only as yet from speculation, and therefore shall drop the subject of the affairs of Bengal, till I can form my opinion from observation.

I hope you will find that my conduct in the narrow sphere allotted me at Fort St. George has been strictly conformable to the principle which you so strongly recommend. The uncommon abilities and unwearied application of Mr. Dupré left me little room to exert myself beyond the limits of my own particular department—the export warehouse, in which I flatter myself that I shall have merited the approbation of my employers. You have been already publicly informed

that the Board came to the resolution in the month of May last, of providing the Madras investment by means of gomastahs. The execution of this design was left to me. I met with great difficulties in the beginning. but by a perseverance which might have been attended with the loss of one year's investment, and of the most fatal consequences to my interest, I have happily succeeded in establishing the business on a footing which promises much future improvement, and an increase of the investment to as large an amount as the Company will be likely to require. At the same time I have a present satisfaction in informing you that the goods have already turned out much superior to those formerly provided by contract both in price and quality, particularly the fine goods, which are beyond all comparison better. I have had the satisfaction of having received from the Board every testimony that I could wish of their approbation;. and I cannot help quoting it as a proof of their candour and disinterestedness, as of their conviction of the propriety of my recommendations, that at the time that I was pointing out additional emoluments to the 'post of warehouse keeper, usually the office of the second on the spot, they all cheerfully acquiesced in an appointment which precluded themselves from all chance of succeeding to it, by giving the charge of it to Mr. Charles Smith (though not a member of Council) under the present direction of the president. I shall say no more on this subject, but to refer you to our minutes of December last, in which you will find a very explicit account of all the arrangements made in this department.

As to the rest of my conduct, I must content myself with the humble merit of having made it my study to give every support in my power to the measures pursued by the president, and to contribute my share to the good understanding which I had the happiness to see

reign at the Board during the whole time that I was a member of it. I cannot wish myself a better fortune than to be seconded by men equally disposed to support and co-operate with me, and equally satisfied with the rectitude and propriety of my conduct. I beg leave to add this further testimony of the spirit which has directed the resolution of the Board, that in many points of the greatest importance their private interests have manifestly been opposed by the public measures. Many of the Council are among the Nabob's creditors whose claims they have firmly contested; and in almost every point contested with the Nabob. The facilitating the payment of his debts has generally been urged by him as an inducement for the Board to consent to his demands.

Here permit me to express my acknowledgments for my share in the candid and generous approbation given by the Court of Directors in their last general letters, particularly that to the select committee, of the conduct of the Board. Such an encouragement is the best security that you can have for the continuance of their zealous attachment to the service, and I am greatly mistaken if you do not find this opinion justified by the event.

I do not mean that you are to look for splendid successes, or large contributions to the Company's income from the Madras adminstration. All I fear that you have yet to hope for from that presidency is a conduct guarded against legal censure, and a procrastination of the dangers with which it is surrounded. The confirmation of the peace was an event of the last importance to the safety of the Company in the Carnatic.

Threatened by the Marhattas on our borders, obliged to take up arms against an enemy which had begun to create alarms in the very heart of the province; in-

sulted and embarrassed by the King's late minister; deprived of all confidence in the Nabob who had declared, that he considered himself in a state of neutrality with respect to our contests with the French, who were his allies by the late forced construction of the treaty of Paris; and unprovided with money, provisions, and of every requisite of war, but men and stores from our own resources; under all these disadvantages we received from you the news of an impending war with France expressed in terms implying an almost certainty of it; at the same time we had advices of absolute certainty, that the French were preparing to bring a great armament from their islands against us. I will not say what would have happened had their design taken place, but nothing less than the interposition of a miracle could have brought about an event so favourable to the Company, or contributed so seasonably to their salvation, as the Spanish convention. These reflections on *past* dangers cannot be imputable to *timidity*, a very harsh censure which you cast, allow me to say, too hastily, on a paper which went home last year, and which was written with a very different spirit, and with a tendency very foreign from that supposed by the Court of Directors. Our suspicions of the French which you treat as chimerical were supported on the same grounds, and expressed in terms yet less alarming that those which we received from the Company in a letter of nearly the same date with those reflections.

The picture of your affairs was very fairly drawn; every possible consequence from every measure was stated, that you might the better judge for yourselves what expedients were necessary for such a condition of your affairs, and neither be obliged to trust blindly to our recommendations, nor to form unsuitable measures for want of due information. Though the

dangers to which each proposition was liable were strongly coloured and enumerated with much precision, they are justified by past experience when you lay under fewer disadvantages than you now do; but they are represented as far from unsurmountable, provided the hands of your servants were loosed from the shackles by which they are hindered from repelling them. This is the scope of all the arguments contained in that paper; and I will almost venture to stake my credit on the consequences foretold in it, if the Marhattas become masters of the Ballaghaut.

Much has been said upon the subject of the powers given to His Majesty's minister, in our general letters, and in the correspondence with them. The approbation which you have expressed of the past conduct of our Government, and the promise of your future support, is a great encouragement to it in the part which it may yet have to act with the King's minister; they are not equally matched. The latter may exceed his commission, may make demands in the King's name without authority, may plead the same sanction for other unconstitutional acts, and all the notice taken of it is that his proceedings are disavowed, and his successor enjoined to observe a more wary conduct. What would have been the consequence had the Company's representatives committed the smallest error of which the ministry could have taken an advantage.

I am not myself a competent judge of the advantages which may be obtained by the presence of a squadron in India, even if a war were to happen. I will dare to affirm that all the stores of Mauritius, and every man in the island, may be safely transported without even the hazard of being intercepted by Sir Robert Harland, were his force even quadruple of what it is, unless he could know with certainty the

exact time, place, and course of their destination, which is impossible. He may shut up their principal port he may protect ours, and his ships may accidentally fall in with one of their vessels of trade; they may possibly do more, for I repeat that I am but imperfectly acquainted with the subject. But is it in the power of a squadron to afford any services that can compensate for the national loss sustained by so enormous an expense, and the absence of so great a part of the national strength? What equivalent can it afford to the Company for the injury which their reputation has sustained by the unnatural powers given to the man who commands? powers given not to extend the Britishdominion, or increase the honour of the nation, but surreptitiously stolen out for the visible purpose of oppressing the King's subjects, and weakening the hands by which his influence is sustained in India! Gracious God! what ideas are the powers of this empire taught to entertain of the Majesty of the King of Great Britain!

Whether there be peace or war your affairs will never prosper till the King's minister is recalled. His presence can do no good. It alienates the Nabob from the Company, and is the original cause of all the distress which you have suffered and are likely to suffer in your finances. This has not yet indeed been very great, but it has been sufficient to prevent the execution of the works which have been ordered, and which appear very necessary for putting the fort in a state of defence, and to suspend the advances for the investment at a time when they were most wanted, and when the novelty of the business made it of the utmost consequence that it should meet with as few retardments as possible. I mention this effect of the ministerial interference, because I apprehend it counteracts one of the most essential objects of the administration,

if it be expected that Fort St. George is to bear its quota of the annual tax paid to Government, which it most assuredly will not, and cannot, while such a power exists.

I understand that Sir Robert Harland intends to visit Bengal. I do not know any pretext that can require his presence there, unless it be to examine the ditch at Chandernagore, an object beneath the dignity of the royal representative. However, I do not apprehend that he can create much trouble there, as I do not see how the King can be considered by any implication as a guarantee of the peace of Bengal.

Having mentioned the removal of the King's minister as essential to the prosperity of your affairs, give me leave to add, that it is equally necessary to restore to your government of Madras that authority which it always exercised till lately in the administration of the affairs of the Carnatic, such I mean as are connected with their own, to ascertain a more equitable proportion of the charge to be borne by the Company and the Nabob of the military disbursements; and to secure a share in all the advantages which may be acquired by your arms; at present the risk is almost wholly the Company's and the fruits entirely the Nabob's. The Board have recommended, and I have also found occasion in treating of the investment to make use of some arguments enforcing the same proposition, to take the management of the Jagheer into your own administration. A great military establishment, with a fund to support it, or any means of immediate subsistence, but such as you receive from the Nabob's bounty, and which it is at his option to withhold from you, can never be effectually employed for your own service, and may prove your destruction. I will not make any apology for the liberty which I have taken in giving my opinion thus freely. I hope

I need not. I can have no motive of self interest in what I have recommended. If I have thrown any new lights on your affairs, what I have said will be useful. If you think I err in my judgment of them, it will at least do no harm.

I say nothing on the subject of affairs in the Balla-ghaut, because you will have it probably at large in the general letter.

I left Fort St. George the 2d of this month, and expect to reach Calcutta within four days more. I close my letter now, as I do not expect that I shall have either occasion or leisure to add much to it on my arrival.

I will not repeat the subjects of my former letter, having already lengthened this beyond all reasonable bounds. I beg the continuance of your protection and confidence, and shall ever remain with the sincerest attachment, Sir, your most obedient and devoted servant.

CHAPTER VII.

Outline of the Political and Financial Affairs of the Company, from 1765 to 1772—The Court's Instructions to Hastings—His Reply—Letters upon various subjects.

THOUGH I have not judged it expedient to linger over the history of a province, in the management of which Mr. Hastings never played except a secondary part, I conceive that imperfect justice would be done to his merits were I to launch him all at once on the troubled sea of Bengal politics without explaining the nature of the difficulties which met him there, by describing the state of absolute confusion into which, in all its departments, the affairs of that settlement had fallen. Some portion, indeed, of this explanation has already been given. In a previous chapter I sketched an outline of the principal events which occurred between the acquisition of the duanny in 1765 and the final return of Lord Clive to England; touching lightly, at the same time, on the various parliamentary inquiries to which, up to a later date, the Company's affairs were subjected. But it is necessary that the results both of the one and the other should be more distinctly set forth; and I must, therefore, crave at once the indulgence and the

attention of my reader, while I endeavour, with as much brevity as possible, to do so.

The general results of Lord Clive's second administration may in few words be thus described. He entirely remodelled the Company's military establishment; he brought the English as a substantive power into political connexion with the Emperor and the Nabob of Oude; he caused the covenant against the acceptance of presents by the servants of the Company to be executed; and he threw impediments in the way of the prosecution by them or their agents of an inland trade. Into the latter arrangement he seems, indeed, to haye entered with reluctance; for it was a profitable source of emolument to individuals, out of which, under the head of duty, about one hundred thousand pounds per annum passed into the public treasury. But the Directors were resolute, and even Clive was forced, in profession at least, to give way; though not till he had secured to his friends and himself, and to all future governors, as a compensation, a per centage of one and an eighth on the whole of the revenues collected. In other respects, I cannot find that Lord Clive did much for his employers. The scheme of a double government, which owed to him its existence, was by him confirmed and established. No advantage was taken of the death of the Nabob Nujam ul Dowlah, either to introduce a better system into the administration of the

country, or to diminish the expenses of that already in force; but his brother Sijeff ul Dowlah was raised as a matter of course to the musnud, and became, on account of his extreme youth, more than ever a tool in the hands of his courtiers. Accordingly, while Clive was proclaiming in London that the golden age was come, and the proprietors of India stock, trusting to his assurances, were increasing their dividends while they borrowed money to pay them, the country out of which this inexhaustible supply of wealth was expected to be gathered sank day by day more deeply into confusion. For, the entire management of the revenues being in the hands of natives, without any efficient control, or knowledge sufficient to exercise it, on the part of the Company's servants,—zemindars, rajas, and other agents made their own terms, both with the ryots and the Duan, of which the results were, that on all occasions the Company sustained a loss, no one being able so much as to point out the particular account into which errors might have crept.

The authorities at Bengal soon found themselves incapable of satisfying the expectations of their superiors at home. Instead of forwarding to London large remittances, they discovered that the resources of the country were inadequate to pay for its protection; and after drawing bills till forbidden to continue the practice any longer, they

were driven to the necessity of raising money upon public loan. This was a terrible blow to the proprietors, who had gone so far in May, 1767, as to vote for that year a dividend of twelve per cent. on their capital: neither did it escape the notice of the public. A prodigious outcry was raised, of which the King's government, already eager to possess itself of the patronage of India, failed not to take advantage. Then followed questions as to the capability of subjects of the crown to acquire sovereign power in any part of the world except for the nation; committees then sat in the House of Commons to consider these questions; and, finally, in June, 1767, the first of a series of Acts was passed, which ended in establishing on the part of Parliament an absolute right of interference in all the concerns of the Company. By that Act, it was declared, that till the next session no dividend should be voted at the India House of more than ten per cent.; while by and bye the territorial revenues were secured to the Company, only for the limited space of two years, and at the expense to them of an annual payment of £400,000 into the public exchequer.

From that day began a system of fierce political warfare, of which the belligerents were the East India Company on the one hand, and the King's ministers on the other. It was the object of the latter to wrest from the Company all the power

and patronage of the East; it was the object of the former to resent this aggression, and to retain both the patronage and the power in their own hands. Between them the public, as must always happen in like cases, could alone decide; for neither might the minister hope to carry his point without carrying the nation along with him, nor could the Company sustain the struggle against the minister, unless the people and their representatives should support them. Hence both parties were assiduous in their efforts to spread reports abroad—the one of systematic mismanagement and corruption on the part of the Company's agents, the other of better and more prosperous times to come,—so soon as the effects of many revolutions should have passed away, and India be permitted to enjoy for a few seasons the blessings of an enlightened administration. Moreover, it is worthy of remark that not one of all the many changes which occurred, either in the persons or the professed opinions of the individuals composing the King's cabinet, effected any substantial change in reference to this question. The Rockinghams, the Norths, the Rockinghams again, the Coalition, all these, as well as Pitt's government, which succeeded the Coalition, aimed at the same thing. Some might be less scrupulous than others, both as to the means chosen, and the extent to which they desired those means to be applied; but all coveted at least a

share, and that a large one, in the distribution of Indian patronage; and all, either by fair means or by foul, succeeded in obtaining it.

From the date of Lord Clive's return to England, in 1767, every thing seemed to contribute, for awhile, towards the accomplishment of the ministers' wishes. Under Mr. Verelst there was neither an increase of profit to the Company, nor any movement made towards securing to the people of Bengal the benefits of an efficient government. The war with Hyder, on the contrary, from which the Carnatic suffered so much, tended but to drain the sister presidency of its resources, while the debt continued to accumulate from day to day, and the investments became proportionably valueless. Still Lord Clive's opinions were held every where in profound respect. He pronounced that the fault rested exclusively with the local authorities at Fort William,—a view of the case in which both the ministers who desired to subvert the Company's privileges, and the Company which struggled to retain these privileges, professed to coincide. They were alike blind to the fact, that the chief if not the whole blame was attributable to the very absurd system of government which Lord Clive himself had established. Accordingly, the ministers wrung from the Company in 1769 a further subsidy of £400,000 per annum, besides extensive advantages to the general commerce of the

nation, as the price of a retention for five years longer of the much loved territorial revenues. On the other hand, the Company resolved to institute a searching inquiry into the conduct of their representatives abroad. With this view, a commission was voted, at a general meeting of proprietors, to consist of three gentlemen, Mr. Vansittart, the late governor of Bengal, and Mr. Scrafton and Colonel Ford, with powers to investigate on the spot, and to introduce into every department of the state such reforms as might to themselves appear expedient. It was hardly to be expected that such a proposal should meet with no opposition, both in the Cabinet and elsewhere. The Cabinet had no desire to see the Company's power consolidated and improved,—individuals who profited by abuses were reluctant that they should be remedied. Accordingly, while the latter declaimed against any measure of the sort, as entirely uncalled for, and therefore involving the Company in needless expense, the former insisted that to King's officers, to the commanders of the King's ships, or, at all events, to persons nominated by the crown, and, of course, acting as the crown's representatives, authority should be given to adjust all maritime affairs, to negociate with native princes, and otherwise to play a principal part in the offensive and defensive policy of the country.

Great was the alarm in the Court of Directors

when this proposition was communicated to them. They saw, that if acceded to it must end in the speedy subversion of the Company's government, and they urged the proprietors by every means in their power to oppose it. Accordingly, the proprietors met, and, after a long and acrimonious debate, it was decided that the powers demanded for an officer of the crown were inadmissible. The ministers were not disposed at that time to enforce, by any violent procedure, the acceptance of their terms. The Company would agree to sanction the interference of the officer commanding the King's ships only within the limits of the Persian Gulf, where with some of the chiefs exercising authority along its shores, they were embroiled; a requisition which had been sent in for two ships of the line for the Bay of Bengal was suspended, and the legal objection to the commission of the supervisors fell to the ground. Two frigates were soon afterwards ordered upon Indian service. In one of these the three Commissioners took their passage, and neither of them nor of the vessel that contained them has any account been received up to the present hour.

Meanwhile, Mr. Verelst, having resigned the chair at Fort William, Mr. Cartier, one of Hastings's early contemporaries and friends, became president in his room. This was in the beginning of 1770; and the same year brought upon Bengal,

in addition to the other miseries under which it groaned, the heavy scourge of a famine. The loss of life occasioned by this calamity was fearful; it has even been estimated at one-third of the population of the province; and the detriment to the revenue, which depended always on the results of the harvest, fully kept pace with it. Yet no attempt was made by the existing government either to lessen the amount of direct expenditure, or to diminish, even in a trivial degree, the costs of collection. Though the death of the young Nabob, which occurred on the 10th of March, furnished them with an excellent opportunity of retrenchment; and though they were not unaware that the allowance made for the maintenance of his household greatly exceeded that which their employers conceived to be sufficient, they confirmed Mubarick ul Dowlah, likewise a minor, in all the emoluments and privileges which had been conceded to his brother. For this they were sharply reproved in a general letter from the Court of Directors, bearing date 10th of April, 1771; in which the following sentence occurs: "Convinced as we are that an allowance of sixteen lacs per annum will be sufficient for the support of the Nabob's state and rank, while a minor, we must consider every addition thereto as so much to be wasted on a herd of parasites and sycophants who will continually surround him; or, at least, to be hoarded up, a con-

sequence still more pernicious to the Company. You are, therefore, during the nonage of the Nabob, to reduce his annual stipend to sixteen lacs of rupees."

The instructions quoted here are worthy of remark, as indicating an early wish on the part of the Directors, to effect that which no one had the courage to attempt till the matter was taken up by the subject of this memoir. For the rest I have little else to record, than that neither from it, nor from any other of the hints which the Court from time to time threw out, was any benefit, even the most trivial, derived to the Company. Under Governor Cartier, the difficulties both of the presidency and the courts at home continued progressively to increase. On the 1st of January, 1771, the bonded debt of Bengal amounted to £612,628. At the beginning of the following year it had increased to upwards of £1,700,000, while at home, after some fruitless efforts to brazen the matter out, the Company was reduced to the necessity of soliciting a loan, both from the Bank of England, and from the King's Government. The minister did not refuse to come to the rescue, but he came upon his own terms. The affairs of India were prominently noticed in the King's speech. A Bill introduced by the deputy chairman, for the regulation of the Company's trade, and the better administration of justice in the pro-

vinces, was rejected; a Select Committee of the House of Commons sat again to inquire; and in the end the ministerial measure of 1773 was proposed and carried. Into a consideration of that Act, however, and of the consequences to which it led, I shall not for the present enter. Rather let me recapitulate in few words, the substance of much that has been said elsewhere, in order that the precise state of Bengal, both in its political and financial relations, may be seen, at the period when Mr. Hastings took possession of the Government.

Mr. Hastings, though he quitted Fort St. George so early as the latter end of 1771, and arrived at Calcutta in February, 1772, did not take his seat as President of the Council, till the month of April following. The interval was not, however, wasted, for he devoted it to a study of the nature of the machine which he was expected to regulate, and found it to be in all its departments inefficient. In the first place, the great change which had taken place in the political situation of the presidency had been met by no adequate change in the condition or powers of its government. This was still the same, both in construction and in name, that it used to be when the settlement was purely commercial; while the orders from the Court of Directors were all so framed as to check every attempt at innovation in

the outset. Not appearing to take the circumstance into account, that they had acquired an absolute dominion over an extensive and populous nation, the Directors ceased not to remind their servants that they were the agents not of a military but of a trading body; and that every step taken with a view to change the nature of their relations with the inhabitants of India would be regarded at home as an act of disobedience, and visited with the Court's displeasure. The consequence was, that, as far as it was possible, the President and Council held aloof from interference in the political affairs of the provinces. Indirectly, indeed, they exercised an important influence, of which the tendency was the reverse of beneficial; but greater pains were taken to hide the source from which even that influence proceeded, than would have sufficed, if rightly applied, to improve and arrange into order the valuable materials which, in the course of fifteen years, the Company had been accumulating.

While the President and Council of Fort William found occupation in providing the Company's investments, in managing the sale of import cargoes, in despatching ships, and transmitting to the Court of Directors minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Revenue and the letters of the commander-in-chief of their forces, the executive government was administered in the name of

the Nabob, Mobarick ul Dowlah, a minor, by Mahommed Reza Cawn, a man of no rights or pretensions, on whom had been conferred the style of Nazim of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa. In like manner the revenues were managed by him, and paid over to certain covenanted servants of the Company, who, with the title of supervisors, resided at the principal towns of their respective districts; and were responsible to two boards, stationed, one at the city of Moorshedabad for the superintendency of the districts of Bengal, the other at Patna for that of Bahar. The annual income of the provinces thus collected amounted, in 1772, to £2,373,650. The annual disbursements at the same period came up to £1,705,279, leaving a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £668,371; —to be applied to the purchase of investments, the supply of foreign settlements, the interest of the public debt, and the gradual liquidation of its principal. But so entirely inadequate was this surplus to the drains that were made upon it, that the investments alone required not less a sum than £634,000. Under such circumstances, the embarrassment of the presidency could not fail of becoming continually more oppressive. In 1772, the debts of every denomination stood at the amount of £1,783,300. In the month of April, 1773, they had increased, with the credit of the Government exhausted, to £2,168,691.

Among the current expenses to which the presidency was subject, the payments to the Emperor and the Nabob Mobarick ul Dowlah. were neither the least vexatious nor the least heavy. To the former were annually transmitted, under the denomination of tribute, thirty-five lacs, or £30,000; to the latter thirty-two lacs, or £27,000,—a diminution, doubtless, of the pension originally assigned to him by Lord Clive, yet greater by far than had been enjoyed by any of his predecessors, unless indeed the whole revenues of the soubahdary deserve to be accounted their private poverty. Meanwhile, imposing as the Company's political position really was, the Company's local government had as yet entered into no connexion with any of the chiefs of India, except with the Mogul or King, Shah Allum, and the Vizier, Shuja Dowlah, Nabob of Oude. The former, as has been stated elsewhere, abandoned the English in 1771, to place himself under the protection of the Mahrattas. With the latter the connexion continued in full force under the sanction of a treaty concluded in August 1765; and of which I have already detailed the substance. But though the Nabob was thus entitled, whenever the exigencies of his condition should require, to claim from the English military support, for the extraordinary expenses of which he undertook to pay, the intercourse between his government and that

of Fort William was so managed, that by the latter it was difficult, if not impossible, to obtain at any given moment accurate or satisfactory information as to the truth of the statements which the Nabob might put forth. For to the commander-in-chief of the forces the presidency had committed the charge of communicating between them and their ally, and the commander-in-chief, for reasons not hard to discover, appears to have kept them, upon most subjects, pretty much in the dark. In the beginning of 1772, Sir Robert Baker, who was at the head of the Bengal army, did duty with an entire brigade, constituting the third part of their whole force, within the Nabob's dominions.

Lastly, for I must not dwell too much upon matters of dry detail, Mr. Hastings found that the Supreme Council exercised no efficient control over its subordinate functionaries. On the contrary, as there was a total absence of system from its own proceedings, and a total ignorance of the extent to which its powers extended, the Council seemed rather to be guided by the views of its dependents, than to give the tone to those dependents, in whatever line of duty they might be employed.

The appointment of Mr. Hastings to fill the president's chair at Calcutta was the first decisive step taken by the East India Company to intro-

duce into the provinces over which their rights of duanny extended, a new and more efficient system of general administration. For some time previously they had begun to suspect that Lord Clive's theory of the two-fold government was a false one; and they at length determined, in the words of their own despatch, "to stand forth as Duan, and, by the agency of the Company's servants, to take upon themselves the entire care and management of the revenues." Such a change, however, could not take place, without its influence being felt in every corner of the Empire. It would be necessary, therefore, to proceed with extreme caution in the business; to collect and digest large stores of information, ere any movement should be made; and above all, to have at the head of affairs, some one on whose vigour and discretion absolute dependence could be placed. Mr. Hastings's conduct while member of the select committee at Fort St. George, equally with the views he had expressed when under examination before the House of Commons, pointed him out as eminently qualified to carry into effect the designs of the home authorities. He was accordingly nominated to the high and important charge, and proceeded, as has been explained in his own letters, to undertake it.

If the Courts of Proprietors and Directors had acted with ordinary prudence, they would have taken care on this occasion to throw into the hands

of their new president an accession of authority. The task which they had assigned him was an Herculean one; for it implied nothing less than the accomplishment of a total revolution in Bengal; yet they sent him to undertake it with powers nowise enlarged above those which had proved, in the hands of his immediate predecessors, inadequate to the purposes of ordinary detail. Mr. Hastings found himself one of a body of persons, each of whom possessed the same weight in the government with himself. His vote told for no more, in questions of state, than the vote of any other member of the Council, unless indeed there should be a division of opinions so perfect, that a casting voice might decide it. Nor was this all. While he depended entirely for the influence which he might acquire, on the moral weight which a well-earned fame gave him, the Directors saw fit, by committing to him what they were pleased to term secret instructions, to place him in a somewhat invidious light towards his colleagues at the very outset. Though awakened to the evil tendency of Lord Clive's delusive system, the Directors still believed that a part at least of their misfortunes might fairly be charged on their servants. In particular the falling off in the value of the investments they attributed either to the culpable negligence or the intentional dishonesty of the individuals charged with providing them, and their anxiety to bring the de-

faulters to punishment was extreme. The following shows the extent to which their feelings on this head were carried, while at the same time it appears to justify me in what I have said as to the imprudence with which they would have involved in personal disputes, the very man whose means of usefulness depended on the success with which he might succeed in conciliating the good will of those around him.

From the Secret Committee of the Court of Diiectors.

East India House, London, 8th May, 1771.

Sir,—The Court of Directors could not have evidenced more clearly the confidence they repose in your abilities, zeal, and integrity, than they have done by their appointment of you to preside in their council in Bengal. The importance of the Company's concerns on that side of India will require the full exertion of all those qualifications which we are persuaded you possess, and which will, we assure ourselves, ever be fully exerted while you fill the important station of governor at that presidency. In full confidence thereof, we, the secret committee, now write to you upon an affair which is the subject matter of the sixteenth paragraph of the general letter to the governor and council of the 3rd instant. For although the Court have in the abovementioned letter directed that very particular inquiry be made into this business, we do, nevertheless, in the most confidential manner, signify to you that we place a singular trust and dependence upon your own particular and personal researches into the whole of this transaction; and we therefore direct that you do not fail to investigate it to the bottom, that you obtain the most perfect intelligence of the names of all persons

concerned, either in recommending the measure at first or in purchasing any of the goods in question. That you also ascertain precisely whose property these goods were, and by whom they were examined, sorted, packed, and invoiced, with every other circumstance which can in any degree tend to elucidate an affair which has operated so much to the Company's disadvantage.

And if you shall be able to discover that any persons in our service, of whatever rank or station they may be, have so far forgot and departed from their fidelity as to prefer the convenience or interest of individuals to that of the Company, in any part of the transaction now so very particularly recommended to your impartial investigation, that in such case you do use your utmost endeavours to prevail on your Council to suspend, until the Court's pleasure be known, all and every person or persons who shall appear to you to have acted inconsistent with their duty and the trust reposed in them. We are, your loving friends.

WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.

It was not, however, of those alone who, in providing the investments, postponed, without scruple, the Company's interests to their own that the Court of Directors complained. The determined resistance of their servants to the orders sent out for an immediate discontinuance of the inland trade, especially in the articles of salt, betel, and tobacco, excited their warmest indignation. They, therefore, wrote to Mr. Hastings the following letter, a too ready attention to the matter of which must have led to irreparable discord in the settlement, and frustrated all his future powers of

usefulness. Mr. Hastings, however, on this, as on every other occasion, tempered firmness with delicacy. He caused the obnoxious trade to be abolished, sacrificing for a while all the benefits which used to arise from it, both to the Company and to individuals. But he did so with such gentleness that their parties deprived of their emoluments could take no offence, even while they felt equally with himself that the natives would be very little the gainers by the change. I subscribe the letter because it may be advantageously referred to after the reader shall have gone forward a stage or two in Mr. Hastings's history.

To WARREN HASTINGS, Esq., our President and Governor of Bengal.

London, 18th December, 1771.

1. Notwithstanding we have so often expressed to the successive governors and councils of our presidency of Bengal, our solicitude to promote the prosperity and happiness of the natives of those provinces, from which the public, as well as the Company, derives such great advantages; and that, to effect the same, we have repeatedly given the most peremptory orders for laying open to the natives the several articles of the inland trade, more particularly those of salt, betel nut, and tobacco, which are considered by them as the necessaries of life; yet we are at length constrained to believe that our intentions have been counteracted and our orders disobeyed, even by some of our servants whose stations we had reason to hope would have prevented them from pursuing their private emolument by any indirect and unwarrantable means.

2. We therefore shall not hesitate to declare that

we have received such information as will not permit us to doubt but that several of our Council who were members of that board at the time of the despatch of the Lord Mansfield, in April, 1771, and many of our servants in the different districts of the country, appointed as supervisors of the collection of our revenues, had, in manifest violation of our orders, entered into a combination and unduly exercised the power and influence derived from their stations in order to carry on a monopoly in the several articles of salt, betel nut, and tobacco; and that they had been so far lost to the principles of justice and humanity as to include rice and other grain in the same destructive monopoly, by which an artificial scarcity was made of an article so necessary to the very being of the inhabitants.

.3. As upon a charge of this nature we cannot but apply every means in our power to detect the guilty, and by exemplary punishment prevent the continuance of such proceedings as are not only a dishonour to our service, but a reproach to human nature—and as we repose the most feperct confidence in your abilities, integrity, and zeal or our service—we have thought fit to commit to your sole care the detection of those crimes which have been charged on the servants of the Company. It is, therefore, our pleasure and command that you enter without delay into a strict scrutiny of the conduct of the several members who composed our Council at the time of the Lord Mansfield's departure from Bengal, in April, 1771, and of the persons appointed to supervise in the different districts of the country the collection of the revenues, in respect to their having been engaged in a monopoly of salt, betel nut, tobacco, and grain; and in this investigation we most seriously enjoin you not to suffer any bias of friendship to interrupt or weaken your researches; and this we have the greater reason to expect, since the

result of your inquiries may bring due chastisement upon the offenders, and thereby conciliate the minds of the natives to our government, and restore prosperity to those extensive provinces which are entitled to our utmost care, both from the ties of interest and humanity,

4. Relying, therefore, upon your judgment and impartiality, and not doubting but they will lead you to the means of obtaining full evidence of those enormities which may have been committed, we hereby direct that if it shall appear to you that any member or members of our before-mentioned Council, or any of our servants appointed to supervise the collection of our revenues, or any other persons in our service, civil or military, have been any ways concerned in these unwarrantable monopolies, such servant or servants be forthwith dismissed our service; and we hereby declare them to be actually so dismissed, as unworthy of holding any office or employment under the Company.

One more specimen of the sort of confidence which the Court of Directors at this juncture reposed in him it is necessary to give. It was believed in Leadenhall-street, not only that the administration of Mahommed Reza Cawn had been eminently disadvantageous to the Company, but that Mahommed himself had been guilty of the grossest peculation, as well as of excessive tyranny in his dealings with the people. As a step preparatory to the introduction of the improved system, the Court was desirous that the delinquencies of Mahommed and his coadjutor Rajah Dooloob Ram should be brought to light; and

to Mr. Hastings they entrusted the care of accomplishing that work. Again, therefore, is he desired to act in a delicate matter apart from his colleagues, and without consulting them; and again he is exposed, by the inconsideration of his superiors, to the hazard of offending his Council.

To Warren Hastings, Esq.

London, 28th August, 1771.

Sir,—By our general address, you will be informed of the reasons we have to be dissatisfied with the administration of Mahomet Reza Cawn, and will perceive the expediency of our divesting him of the rank and influence he holds as Naib Duan of the kingdom of Bengal. But though we have declared our resolution in this respect to our President and Council, yet, as the measures to be taken in consequence thereof might be defeated by that minister, and all inquiry into his conduct rendered ineffectual, were he to have any previous intimation of our design, we, the secret committee, having the most perfect confidence in your judgment, prudence, and integrity, have thought proper to entrust to your especial care, the execution of those measures which alone can render the Naib's conduct subject to the effects of a full inquiry, and secure that retribution which may be due, on the detection of any fraud, embezzlement, or collusive practice in his public or private transactions.

In order, therefore, to make him amenable to a due course of justice, and to prevent the ill consequences which might result from the resentment and revenge which he may conceive on the knowledge of our intentions, we hereby direct and enjoin you, immediately on the receipt of this letter, to issue your private orders for the securing the person of Mahomet Reza Cawn,

together with his whole family, and his known partizans and adherents, and to make use of such measures as your prudence shall suggest, for bringing them down to Calcutta. And it is our pleasure and command, that they be by no means suffered to quit the place until Mahomet Reza Cawn shall have exculpated himself from the crimes of which he now stands charged or suspected, or shall have duly accounted for the revenues collected by him in the Chucklah of Dacca, and have made restitution of all sums which he may have appropriated to his own use, either from the Dewanny revenues or the Nabob's stipends; and, until he shall also have satified the claims of all such persons as may have suffered by any act of injustice or oppression committed by him in the office of Naib Duan.

As the detection of any corrupt practices of which Mahomet Reza Cawn may have been guilty, and the retribution which, in such case, is to be required of him, are equally the objects of public justice and the Company's interest, we assure ourselves that you will sedulously endeavour to penetrate into the most hidden parts of his administration, and discover the reality of the several facts with which he is charged, or the justness of the suspicions we have of his conduct. In this research, your own judgment will direct you to all such means of information as may be likely to bring to light the most secret of his transactions. We, however, cannot forbear recommending to you to avail yourself of the intelligence which Nuncomar may be able to give respecting the Naib's administration; and, while the envy which Nuncomar is supposed to bear this minister may prompt him to a ready communication of all proceedings which have come to his knowledge, we are persuaded that no scrutable part of the Naib's conduct can have escaped the watchful eye of his jealous and penetrating rival.

Hence, we cannot doubt but that the abilities and disposition of Nuncomar may be successfully employed in the investigation of Mahomet Reza Cawn's administration, and bring to light any embezzlement, fraud, or malversation which he may have committed in the office of Naib Duan, or in the station he has held under the several successive Subahs; and while we assure ourselves that you will make the necessary use of Nuncomar's intelligence, we have such confidence in your wisdom and caution, that we have nothing to fear from any secret motives or designs which may induce him to detect the mal-administration of one, whose power has been the object of his envy and whose office the aim of his ambition; for we have the satisfaction to reflect that you are too well apprized of the subtlety and disposition of Nuncomar to yield him any trust or authority which may be turned to his own advantage, or prove detrimental to the Company's interest.

Though we have thought it necessary to intimate to you how little we are disposed to delegate any power or influence to Nuncomar, yet should his information and assistance be serviceable to you, in your investigating the conduct of Mahomet Reza Cawn, you will yield him such encouragement and reward as his trouble and the extent of his services may deserve.

In our general address, we deemed it advisable to mention only that we had received information of Mahomet Reza Cawn's having increased the calamities of the poor, during the height of the famine, by a monopoly of rice and other necessaries of life. We were, indeed, restrained from an open communication on this subject, fearing the consequences which might ensue from the minister's revenge, should he learn by whom such accusation had been brought against him; but, persuaded as we are of your secrecy and discretion,

we herewith transmit to you extract of a letter from Huzzeramul to Robert Gregory, Esq., wherein Mahomet Reza Cawn is charged with a crime of so atrocious a nature, and we the rather advise you of Huzzeramul's information, as we rely on your endeavours to obtain full evidence respecting the truth of this allegation, as well as of such others as are the objects of the scrutiny we have directed to be made into the Naib's conduct.

Sensible as you must be of the importance of the charge thus confidentially committed to you, we shall not seek to animate your zeal for the Company's welfare, but observe only that, by the effectual execution of the separate trusts reposed in you, you will at once render the Company a signal and essential service, and approve yourself worthy of the opinion we have formed of your judgment, prudence, and integrity, and which we have so fully manifested in selecting you to preside in the administration of the government of Bengal. We are, your loving friends.

Such was the spirit in which the Directors of the East India Company entrusted the chief management of their affairs to Mr. Hastings, at a period when, by their own confession, those affairs stood upon the very brink of ruin. Of the temper with which he accepted the trust, and the ardour with which he applied himself to its execution, a far better idea will be formed from the perusal of his own correspondence than from any outline of facts which I could give. I would have confined myself exclusively, in the selection which I now offer, to communications which tell the

tale of the writer's public life connectedly, did I not fancy that the reader might wish to go somewhat beyond this. For we love to see a great man in solitude as well as in the crowd, inasmuch as the true character is often shown more distinctly by trifles than by matters of grave importance.

The allusions contained in the following to the comparative strength of Hyder Ally and the Mahrattas will amuse the reader of the nineteenth century. Mr. Hastings himself remained at the head of affairs in India long enough to change his views entirely on that subject.

To John Purling, Esq.

Fort William, 22nd February, 1772.

Dear Sir,—I have received your favours of the 30th April, 3rd May, and 11th June, 1771. These contain principally recommendations. I have delayed replying to them till this late period in the hopes of receiving another letter, referred to in the first of these as having been sent by the Colebrooke; but, I know not by what accident, it has not yet come to my hands. Letters so rarely miscarry that I do not despair of being able to reply to it by the next despatches, though my present disappointment gives me much uneasiness.

Accept, Sir, of my sincere thanks for my late appointment. The obligations which I before lay under for the countenance and effectual support which you afforded me on my first return to the service were beyond my power to repay. Whether I have really benefited by my removal from Fort St. George to a station of more eclat, but of more trouble and difficulty, and I fear of more danger, from its being an object of

more competition, I must doubt. My partiality to this part of the Company's possessions has, nevertheless, made me rejoice in the exchange, and it shall be my study to render it equally satisfactory to my employers. Let me have their confidence and their support, and arduous as I know my duty will be, I do not despair of acquitting myself of it with credit, to myself and to them also, in the choice which they have made of me to conduct the affairs of this government. I hope, however, that I shall not be made responsible for more than is committed to my charge, for I fear that the powers of this government are more ostensible than real. If the several districts are subject to the jurisdiction of the inferior servants of the Company; if the business of the revenue is entrusted to the chiefs and councils of Murshedabad and Patna, though subject to the control of the presidency, which can only judge of the propriety of their transactions from their own materials; I will take upon me to affirm that the authority of the presidency is in these points merely nominal, nor ought it to be charged with the consequences of any mismanagement, if any, that may have been committed in the country. I only suppose, but do not know, that this is the established system, not having yet had leisure or opportunity to inform myself of the state of the public affairs, in which I find I have much to learn.

I find that the Mahrattas are become almost as dangerous neighbours to these provinces as they are to the Carnatic. I much fear that the pacific system enjoined at Fort St. George, and the too sanguine hopes of which the Court of Directors seem to have formed of the ability of their forces on that establishment to withstand the efforts of all the powers of Indostan, will prove in the end of the most fatal consequences to your affairs.

The Mahrattas might at this time, by a vigorous conduct, be repelled from the Ballaghant, for that country is exhausted of its resources, and their armies subsist by convoys extending in a long line from the borders of their own dominions. These would lie entirely at our mercy, nor could the plunder of the Carnatic, nor even the temporary supplies which the Mahrattas might receive from Tanjour, enable them to live. I do suppose that by this time a peace has been confirmed between them and the Nabob of the Carnatic, through the representations of their Vackeel, the liberality of the Nabob, and the hopes given them of future assistance by his Majesty's minister. The consequences will be that Hyder, deprived of all hope of our support, must fall. This will join the dominion of the Mahrattas to our own borders. A year or two of undisturbed cultivation will restore the resources of the Ballaghant, and enable them to lay up stores at hand, and to invade the Carnatic with impunity from every quarter, nor will all the powers of India, added to yours, save that province from utter ruin. All my hopes are in the spirit and perseverance of Hyder, which may give time for fortune to throw some unforeseen event which may give another turn to his affairs, or suspend his ruin till measures can be taken to prevent it, that is, till the presidency of Fort St. George shall be empowered to take such measures, and for once to assume a dictatorial power in the operations of the Carnatic.

I observe that the Court of Directors have ordered the gomastahs to be withdrawn, and the investment to be provided by Daducy merchants. This is a little singular, and rather discouraging to the hopes which I had entertained of receiving the commendations of my employers, for an arrangement which is the very reverse of these orders, and which I was lately employed to

execute in the investment at Madras. Let me entreat of you to read the minute on our consultations on this subject. They will be found (as I recollect) in the proceedings of the beginning of May and the beginning of December, 1771.

The former contain the reasons for this change, the latter a description of the new establishment and an account of its success. I hope the genius and constitution of the two governments will be duly attended to in the judgment which shall be formed of this measure. It is strictly consonant to former orders of the Company.

Your goods are already improved in their quality and in their price. They are rendered capable of greater improvement. The investment may be increased to a double amount, and the weavers, instead of complaining of oppression, will be thankful for your protection. Your sales, too, I hope, will receive an additional advantage in the strictness of the sorting.

I am not yet a competent judge of the propriety of the Company's orders respecting the investment at this presidency; but it appears to me to be well grounded, and even necessary to restore the free trade of this country. I am not sure that it will have that effect. It will have none but that of debasing the cloths and increasing their price, if the merchants are to be allowed the same privileges, and exclusive powers which were before given to the gomastahs. Some sacrifice will most probably be necessary for effecting the change proposed, and some will be equally requisite for restoring the general trade of the country. A man well experienced in the affairs of this country, and who, I dare say, never read Montesquieu, told me, in answer to some questions which I proposed to him, that the trade of this country was ruined because the magistrate of the country was concerned in it.

It will afford me the greatest pleasure if I can be of service to your nephew, and I shall seek for occasion to serve him, happy if I can repay to him a part of my obligation to you.

Mr. Stuart I know. He has great abilities, and I hope to profit by them. I foresee that I shall want such an assistant.

Permit me to request the continuance of your protection and support. Allow me to add my hopes of being honoured with your friendship. I will venture to assure you that you shall never experience anything in my private or public conduct which shall give you cause to regret the confidence which you have reposed in me, or which you may hereafter give me. I am with the greatest esteem, dear Sir, your much obliged and faithful servant.

The following is addressed to the widow of his early friend, Mr. Vansittart, of whose loss on his passage as a member of the commission to Bengal notice has already been taken. I transcribe it, because of the tone of good feeling which it breathes:—

To Mrs. VANSITTART,

Fort William, 23rd February, 1772.

Dear Madam,—I received the favour of your letter on my arrival at this place, by the hand of your son; I was so fortunate as to be here just in time to see him and to converse with him. He is now going in the Lord Holland to Madras, where his presence will be a great comfort to Mr. and Mrs. Morse, who have been greatly disappointed by the Colebrooke's passing Madras without stopping there. I do not think he will lose much time by this absence from the settlement, as he is of a disposition uncommonly studious,

and seems determined to make himself master of the Persian tongue, one of the first requisites for business in this country. I had the great satisfaction, in my short acquaintance with him, to observe that he possessed a very solid understanding, with a degree of diffidence, which I think rather a recommendation in so young a man, and which will gradually wear off as he mixes with the world. His temper is such as I should have expected he would derive from both his parents, amiable and gentle, and has gained him the affection, as I am assured, of all his shipmates. I mention these qualities (though I believe I but add my single testimony of them to that of all who know him), as I think them the surest pledges for his future success in life. I shall be happy if it should be ever in my power to contribute to it. If his uncle George does not insist on his being with him, I shall press his consent to let him stay with me, and be a part of my family. I think it may be better for him than the retirement of a subordinate factory, and I hope he will be equally in the way of improvement. I shall consider him as having the strongest claim to more than my attention, to my affection; and I shall be happy, if in the proofs which it may be in my power to afford him of it, I can at the same time show that the friendship which I ever bore for his father, was not confined to him alone, but extended itself to every one who was dear to him.

No one knows more, I believe, than I do the misfortune which you have sustained in the loss of a man who was beloved by every one who was acquainted with him, and who would have returned to his family with accumulated honour had it pleased God to have enabled him to fulfil the purposes of his commission. There is yet a possibility, in the conjectures which may be formed to account for his having so long been missing, of his safety; but it is a chance too weak to build any hopes

upon. Your surest resource will be found in that fortitude of mind of which you are so happily possessed, and in the hopes that some recompense may yet be made to you for the worst that may have happened in the blessings which Providence may have in store for your children.

I shall not be wanting in affording every assistance which can be required from me in collecting in the remainder of Mr. Vansittart's affairs. Indeed I believe my own are much connected with them. I have not yet had leisure to look into my own, but Mr. Hancock gives me hopes that both are nearly concluded.

I beg leave to offer my sincere wishes for your happiness, and to assure you that I am, with the greatest esteem and respect, dear Madam, your most obedient humble servant.

To the Honourable JOSIAS DUPRE, Esq.

Fort William, 22d February, 1772.

Dear Sir,—I am yet a stranger to the system of this government. My time has hitherto been mostly engrossed by the usual ceremonials, and my first business I believe will be to make such a disposition of it as to secure a share of it to myself.

I desired Stracey to show you a letter which I had written to the young Nabob, and either to deliver it into his hands or repeat the substance of it in a verbal declaration, or suppress it wholly, as you should advise. I felt a sort of repugnance at taking the same formal leave of him that I did of the Free Mason, because I have a real esteem for him on account of the qualities which I have ascribed to him in my letter. But I wrote it in a hurry and at a late hour, and on reading the copy of it since, I have thought that though the meaning included in the latter part of it is very good and perfectly consonant to my opinion of him, yet the expression looks mightily like nonsense. On that

account I shall be glad if he has an assurance only of my esteem for him verbally. I have troubled you with a letter for the Nabob; it contains only compliments. Will you be so good as to send it to him? I think I ought to write to his sons, but as it might give offence to him, I have omitted it.

You make me happy in the assurance which you give me that my desire to contribute to the support of your administration has received your approbation. I can assure you that I do not wish for anything more than that I may find the same disposition in the members of this board to co-operate with me, as I have ever felt myself impressed with towards you, not less, I can truly say, from motives of personal esteem, than from a just sense of my duty to the public. I have not the vanity to hope that I shall have an equal claim to it. I shall write to you often, and without ceremony—I hope with more matter than this letter contains. I am, with the sincerest esteem and regard, dear Sir, your most obedient and faithful servant.

I beg the favour of you to present my compliments to Mrs. Dupré, with my best wishes, and that you will suppose the same in all my future letters.

To the Honourable JOSIAS DUPRE, Esq.

Fort William, 14th March, 1772.

Dear Sir,—I have not written to you since the 22d of last month, which was the date of my last by the Lord Holland, because nothing new has occurred that required to be communicated.

Captain Leslie* is gone, and my apprehensions of the secret design of this visit appear to have been groundless. Nevertheless, I am not much pleased with these trials. The serpent (as the Nabob would observe upon it) has found out the way, and may bite when he

* Captain Leslie was one of those officers whom the government unwisely thrust into the position of King's envoy to the powers of India.

comes next. I think we are secure from any injury that can be intended us, having the power in our own hands, and being out of the reach of the treaty of Paris, though all the grammarians in Europe were to club their invention to infer from it that the King of Great Britain is a guarantee for the peace of Bengal.

The Cuddaloor schooner was despatched, I think the 2nd, for Artrin and Cudda.

I much fear we are on the eve of a war with the Mahrattas, in spite of the pacific injunctions of our masters, in spite of our endeavours to avoid it, and of the necessities of the country, which much wants an interval of peace and ease. The Mahrattas have entered the country of the Rohillas, lying on the north side of the Ganges, defeated the Rohillas, and entirely dispersed all their forces, and taken possession of Sekketaul, their capital (a city on the north bank of the Ganges, about ninety miles from Delly); Zabata Cawn, their great chief, has fled to Najeelgur (God knows where), and the other chiefs are shut up in their strong holds, so that the whole country, to the borders of Shuja Dowla's dominions, lies at their mercy. The enclosed best describes the miserable state of that country. The brigade ordered by Sir Robert Barker to join him has received orders from hence to halt until we receive some intimation from the Vizier that he wants our assistance. I hope he may have no occasion for it. The time of the year, the situation of the country, shut in by the mountains on the north, and the river which in less than three months more will be impassable, are circumstances which afford us a security for this season. But the Vizier is the only remaining power to oppose them, and we must defend him if they invade his country.

I shall send you the newspapers and other intelligence as often as anything new occurs; and you will

not take it amiss if they are not always accompanied with the formality of a letter when I have nothing to write.

I am yet unemployed, except in reading, learning, but not inwardly digesting. I fear I have a laborious and difficult part to act; but I have hopes of *able* support and *willing*. I wish for no more. Mr. Alexander will have given you the portrait of this government.

I fear your hands are tied, whatever turn the Company's affairs may take in this quarter, as I hear the Mahrattas have concluded the proposed treaty with the Nabob and his Majesty's minister, and I can scarce hope that it would be in your power, after the Mahrattas shall have reduced Hyder, even with the heartiest support the Nabob could give you, to act with effect against them. What will become of your half of the Carnatic, when the other half is in their possession?

To the Honourable JOSIAS DUPRE, Esq.

Fort William, 26th March, 1772.

Dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for your favour of the 28th ultimo, and for the gazettes. I think a war with France very improbable, but I much fear the news of Coote's returning is too well founded. If it proves so, he will probably return a slave of the ministry, not a servant of the Company. I am flattered greatly by your approbation of the letter from Madras, because it is a literal translation of a part of one of my own. The portrait of Bengal extracted from another letter, I am grieved to say, falls short of the life. Will you believe that the boys of the service are the sovereigns of the country under the unmeaning title of supervisors, collectors of the revenue, administrators of justice, and rulers, heavy rulers of the people? They are said to be under the control of the Board of Revenue at Murshedabad and Patna, who are

lords of those capitals, and of the districts annexed to them, and dispose of the first offices of the state. Subject (as it is said also) to the Governor and Council, who, you may take my word for it, if the conclusion be not self-evident, have neither power, trust, nor emolument, but are honoured only with responsibility. This is the system which it seems my predecessor was turned out for opposing, and I will be turned out too, rather than suffer it to continue as it is. Thus much for our internal government. Now for the political. This I will give you in the detail of so much of our occurrences, as it may concern you to be acquainted with.

The Mahrattas have crossed the Ganges, taken Sukkertaul, the capital of the Rohilla country, which lies between the Ganges, the mountains of Tibbet, and the dominions of the Vizier. They have defeated and dispersed the Rohilla forces which opposed them, and the whole country of course became subject to their ravages.

Sir Robert Barker, who, it seems, is minister plenipotentiary with the Vizier, instantly sent orders to the brigade quartered at Patna to march to the assistance of the Vizier, whom he represented as in a state of the most abject despair; and he desired the Board to give their sanction to this act of authority. It is remarkable that he had before desired the Board to order the brigade to march to the banks of the Carrumnassa, lest they might be wanted, and that they had actually marched before orders were received, and that the first news of it came in private letters. The Board, however, have disapproved of these acts of the general, and have ordered the army to halt. I hope the next orders will be for their return. Look at the map, and reflect on the time of the year, and you will see how little probability there is of the Mahrattas disturbing the Vizier this year. In all this time the Government

has not received a letter from the Vizier, nor does the general intimate even that he wants our assistance. On the contrary, he says he can hardly keep him from taking advantage of the calamities of his neighbours, and joining the Mahrattas in the plunder of the country; and a letter just received from him mentions an offer of the Mahrattas to cede to him all the Rohilla country on that side of the river, in the hope of obtaining his acquiescence in their attempts to possess themselves of the countries lying on the other side—a compromise not likely to take effect. I wish it could, for I see less danger from it, than from running headlong into a war with them. I must again refer you to the map for my reasons. I need not tell you that I write for your inspection only. I shall keep no secret from you, because I think you ought to know what is doing here for your own guidance in the transactions which have any connexions with this government. In most they will be found to be united. I shall be obliged to you too for your opinion and advice when I can furnish materials sufficient for either. I am with the sincerest and most affectionate regard and esteem, dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

The following, which relates to a practice then in operation of pressing the cattle of the cultivators as often as troops happened to march through any district, I give,—not on account of its importance, considered as a public document, for, in that point of view, it is of slight value; but, because it exhibits the kind and playful disposition of the writer in a very pleasing light.

To George Vansittart, Esq.

Dear George,—I received yours of the 27th March yesterday. I do not choose to give 700 rupees for a bauz, but the Nabob will like it the better for being dear. One pair I must have, and desire they may be cheap. I thank you for your present. Don't you know that this looks like a hint to trouble you with no more commissions, if I chose to take it?

Wilkins is going home. Poor Reid, I fear, is on the eve of a longer voyage, to that place from whose bourne no traveller returns. What plan or project will you devise for your continuance where you are? You have time before you sufficient to think of it, and I shall be happy if I can join in adopting it. As you have communicated your thoughts on this subject to nobody, you had better keep them to yourself. I except myself.

Your last general letter was debated at our last council, and a resolution passed upon it, which I perceive waits to grow cold before it is to be sent to you. The portrait of your pressing system does honour equally to your good sense and humanity. The Board thinks, and so do I, that the expedient proposed will burthen the Company with a heavy expense, and not answer the end; and the following theorem is proposed in its room. Suppose every farmer in the provinces was to be enjoined to maintain a number of good serviceable bullocks, proportionate to the amount of his farm, to be allowed to make what use of them he pleases, during a time of peace, or want of service; but be obliged to furnish the Government with them on a requisition made to him by the collector in writing (not by seepoys, delects, or hercarras), and the collector to send them to the army. Would not this answer the end proposed? Would not they choose rather to submit to so trifling a charge than be frightened, plun-

dered, and insulted, and have their lands deserted on every rumour of a march of a party of seepoys? I will suppose the whole province to be let out in farm, and every farmer possessed of a revenue of 10,000 rupees to be assessed for three bullocks. This tax, which will scarcely be felt, will produce near 1,500 bullocks, and you in your estimate suppose 1,000 to be sufficient; and the annual expense of these, allowing them to last but a year, and allowing them to be idle all the year, and only eat grain, which are three great allowances, will be but 132 rupees. But it might be proved that it would not amount to 50 rupees. Where there is no farmer, the shiedar, or aumil, that is, the district, should furnish the number prescribed. The order might be issued at once to all the collectors, and by each collector to the farmers, or aumils, who should be fined if they failed within a given time to send their quota, or if the cattle they sent were unserviceable; and exemplarily punished if, in default of their own, they took those of the tenants. I maintain that the whole might be collected in a fortnight's time with ease from the remotest parts of the province. In like manner cooleys might be furnished by a tax on the people: for if every village was obliged to send one, or but every pergunnah one, and be responsible for the attendance of that one, and no pressing were allowed, you might have what number you pleased. Don't throw yourself back in your burra chokey, and tell me it won't do—the orders will not be obeyed—the farmers are entitled by their leases to a deduction for plunder and oppression—that it is the custom of the country to press, (that I know you won't say)—that it is easy to make regulations, &c. &c., but consider seriously what effects such an order will have reduced to practice, and, if practicable, lay it down as a rule that it shall be obeyed. If the farmers refuse, (they

dare not refuse,) let them be entitled to no greater deduction than the amount of the maintenance of so many bullocks as you require them to keep, in order to save them from plunder. I have this moment received the draught of your letter. It is proposed to provide for 1,000 bullocks only. This is not sufficient—but you may improve on the hint. Yours most affectionately.

I subjoin a specimen of his manner of dealing with the young men whom those in power, or his own private friends, recommended to his notice:—

To Mr. Elliot.

18th April, 1772.

Sir,—I received your letter, with that of Mr. Pasley inclosed. I am happy on all occasions of showing attention to Mr. Pasley's recommendation, and shall be glad of the occasion which your presence here (whenever your business permits) may afford me, of assuring you of my particular good dispositions towards you, from the interest which Sir George Colebrooke takes in whatever concerns you, as well as the desire I have to conciliate the esteem of one of Sir G. Elliot's eminence and worth. There is, however, one recommendation which will always be stronger with me than either that of connexion or mere predilection of favour—I mean that of real merit. I am happy to learn that this will not be wanting on your part, and I mention it not as mere matter of compliment, but as the properest encouragement to a young man of honourable feelings, to make him persist in that line which will best recommend him to the favour and protection of his superiors in general, as well as to the particular friendship of, Sir, your affectionate humble servant.

To Sir Robert Baker.

Fort William, 21st April, 1772.

Sir,—I received with much pleasure the favour of your letter, and return you my thanks for your congratulation on my arrival in Bengal.

I should have been earlier in this acknowledgment, but that I wished to accompany it with my sentiments on other subjects; which, added to the incessant interruption which has been my lot since my arrival at this place, has been the cause of my protracting it to this time. I should be very sorry that this delay should give you room, in our early acquaintance, to suspect me of inattention; and I beg leave to obviate such a conclusion by the assurance of my sincere esteem, founded on the knowledge of your character for many years past, as well as on the opinion of many of my friends who have had opportunities of being personally acquainted with your merit and abilities.

The late correspondence between you and this Board has been a subject of great uneasiness to me. I meant to have said something upon it, but I think it has been sufficiently canvassed in the late letters from hence. Allow me only to remark in a word, that independent of the considerations which respect the political state of affairs in this country, there are many powerful causes which render every kind of caution and circumspection necessary to prevent the appearance of our taking an active part in the quarrels of our neighbours, but more especially such as the Mahrattas are concerned in. I will explain myself more clearly upon this subject when I have more leisure to give you my thoughts upon it. In the mean time, I beg you will be assured that it would give me infinitely more pleasure to add to your consideration, if my aid were necessary to it, than to take any measure that might tend, in the least degree, to lessen it.

Enclosed is a letter to the Vizier, which I beg leave to send under your cover. It contains only assurances of the readiness of this government to afford him assistance, and such an explanation of the Board on the subject of his requisition, as might prove more satisfactory to him. I would send a copy of it for your perusal, but am too late to get one written to-night; and I take it for granted that you will be made acquainted with the substance of the letter from the Vizier. I am, with very much esteem, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

To SAMUEL MIDDLETON, Esq.

Fort William, 22nd April, 1772.

Dear Sir,—I have been favoured with your letters of the 10th, 13th, and 16th instant.

Your recommendation of Mr. Russell would be a sufficient inducement, had I not received other testimonies of his merit, for my wishing to continue him in his present charge. I hope there will appear no objection to it.

I have had much conversation with Mr. Graham on the subject of the ensuing settlement, and am happy to find our ideas agree in every material point. I am assured by him that they correspond also with yours. I leave him to inform you of particulars, for I have not sufficient leisure. The Board have resolved on farms and long leases. This is the only subject which has been yet before them. I wait but for a day's exemption from the duties of my new office, to prepare the subject for the general determination upon it, and hope to get it concluded within the next week. The points which are likely to take place, and which I mention in confidence, for fear of ill consequences from their being known, are these:—

The first I have mentioned above.

The second, a committee of the Board to go on a circuit to form the settlement of each district on the spot.

The third, I believe, I need not mention. A former letter of yours has pointed out both the necessity of it, and your ideas and expectations concerning it.

The rest are rather corollaries on these. On the second I wish to be favoured with your sentiments and wishes. I should be glad to have your assistance in it. Your experience, and, allow me to add, your disposition, equally contribute to make me desirous of it. As the head of the revenue branch at the city, there seems a propriety in it. It may also be pleaded against it, that your presence at the city may not be dispensed with. I state both arguments, and request your decision upon them, remarking, by-the-by, that this is a matter on which the Board must decide. I almost fear to have a voice in it. Mr. Graham will of course be one.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for the pleasing sentiments which you express on my admission to the government. I have not been able yet to attend to your application for military stores, but the subject shall not rest much longer.

I will write to you on the subject of the court martial to-morrow. It is a new matter, and will form a precedent; it must, therefore, be maturely considered.

On the question proposed by Mr. Harwood these queries occur:—Have the officers of the brigade sepoys stationed with him, orders to obey him as their superior? (I think I can answer this in the affirmative.) Has Mr. Harwood any kind of warrant to order court martials? If yes, undoubtedly his authority on this point is the same with the brigade as with the pergunnah sepoys.

I need not tell you that I write in a hurry. I wish

you may understand me. I am, with the most unfeigned regard, dear Sir, your most obedient and faithful servant.

I subjoin a communication on a different subject. From the management of treaties with crowned heads to the preparation of silk thread, and the purchase of cacoons, there was nothing which eluded the personal attention of the governor.

To Mr. Wits.

Fort William, 29th April, 1772.

Sir,—I am favoured with your letters of the 27th February and 12th instant. The length of these letters, my desire to be informed of the subjects to which they allude, and the little leisure which has been allowed me from other affairs, have been the reasons which have hitherto prevented my reply to them.

In the first place, allow me to return you my thanks for your congratulations on my arrival in this country. In the execution of the many duties annexed to my station, it will afford me a very sensible satisfaction if I can contribute to the success of the business entrusted to your charge, and which you seem to prosecute with so much zeal and assiduity.

I am sorry to learn that you have met with difficulties and obstructions in the establishment of your filatures. There is no doubt that the inhabitants may be easily persuaded to sell their cacoons. They will voluntarily fly to you from all quarters of the province with their goods for sale, if they understand that they will receive a larger profit by your purchases, than by converting their cacoons into putney. But there is a great hazard of the price of silk being so much augmented by the encouragements thus offered them by you, as to render it unfit for the Company's trade. It

is beyond a dispute that the price of silk is universally double of what I have known it, or of what it was but a few years past. It is also past a doubt that the silk manufactured by you, although excellent, and perfect in its fabric, is so dear, that upon a comparison of it with the prices of the best silk sold at the Company's sales, the Company will infallibly lose by it. The causes of this I know not. They appear to be in the price given for the cacoons; as I am firmly persuaded that the charges of your filature, taking into your account the superior quality of the silk produced from it, are much below those of the silk manufactured in the usual progress of the natives.

An oven for killing the worms is indispensably necessary. If I mistake not, orders have been sent for the construction of them.

I will frankly confess to you that I do not see the same advantages in the expensive works which you have annexed to your reels. I mean the bassines, the furnaces, and bars of iron for the tender threads of silk to pass through. These will prove a heavy article in the Company's dead stock. They will for ever require repairs, and by being made the necessary appendages to your improvements, which, otherwise, I think are admirable, they will preclude the inhabitants from adopting the same method of winding the silk from the cacoons. Why will not your reel, with the earthen pots, the occasional moveable stoves, and the other simple implements to which the natives are accustomed, which are all within their reach, and cost nothing, answer all the purposes of a more complete or a more showy mechanism? I propose these as doubts, or queries, not as assertions. A better information from you may possibly show that I am mistaken.

I shall write very particularly to Mr. Gruebcr, and

make no doubt that he will readily afford you all the assistance in his power. You may at all times depend on mine, in such matters as I can understand. It is not in my power to go through the long correspondence which has passed between the factory of Cossimbazar and you; nor could it convey to me the information which I wish for, since it consists rather of comments and alterations than a regular series of facts or proposals.

In any representation which you may have occasion to make, if you will do me the favour to communicate your sentiments to me as to a person totally uninformed, I shall cheerfully bestow as much time as I have to spare in considering and replying to them. I should be very sorry to put you to the trouble of a journey to the presidency for the sake of a personal explanation of any matters which respect your employ. Three written words convey more information, and contribute more to real business, than fifty used in conversation. I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

P. S.—Since writing the above, I have received your letter of the 20th, with the musters of silk.

There is a prodigious accumulation of correspondence upon my table additional to this, in the course of which every step that was taken to establish a better system of management is traced; and an admirable picture set forth of the business-like habits, and extraordinary versatility of talent, which distinguished the writer; but it would be drawing too much upon the patience of the general reader were I to insert it. My object will be sufficiently attained when I state, that from the hour of his accession to the governor's chair, Mr.

Hastings caused his influence to be acknowledged everywhere; and that, for a season at least, he carried along with him the hearty approbation of his employers, as well as the support—sometimes obtained not without difficulty—of those around him. The subjoined despatch, with the official reply to it, will show how exactly his arrangements had fulfilled, and promised to fulfil, the wishes of the Court of Directors.

To the Secret Committee of the Honourable Court of Directors for the Affairs of the Honourable United East India Company.

Cossimbuzar, 1st September, 1772.

Gentlemen,—This accompanies a duplicate of my letter of the 24th April last.

Since that date I have duly received the duplicate and triplicate of your commands of the 28th August, 1771.

The immediate departure of the Colebrooke, which sailed (as I recollect) the day after my letter of the 24th April had reached her, prevented my giving you further intelligence of the issue of the measures which I had taken for the arrest of Mahommed Reza Cawn. As your commands were peremptory, and addressed to myself alone, I carefully concealed them from every person except Mr. Middleton, whose assistance was necessary for their execution, until I was informed by him that Mahommed Reza Cawn was actually in arrest, and on his way to Calcutta. To have consulted the Board on a point on which your authoritative commands had left me without a choice, or to have desired their assistance when I had sufficient power to act without it, would have been equally improper. But I will confess that there were other cogent reasons for this

reserve. I was yet but a stranger to the characters and dispositions of the members of your administration. I knew that Mahommed Reza Cawn had enjoyed the sovereignty of this province for seven years past, had possessed an allowed annual stipend of nine lacs of rupees, the uncontrolled disposal of thirty-two lacs entrusted to him for the use of the Nabob, the absolute command of every branch of the Nizâmut, and the chief authority in the Dewannee. To speak more plainly, he was in everything but the name the Nâzim of the province, and in real authority more than the Nâzim. I could not suppose him so inattentive to his own security, nor so ill versed in the maxims of Eastern policy, as to have neglected the due means of establishing an interest with such of the Company's agents as by actual authority, or by representation to the honourable Company, might be able to promote or obstruct his views. I chose therefore to avoid the risk of an opposition, to put the matter beyond dispute, and then to record what I had done. The same reflections occurred to me when I proposed to entrust Mr. Middleton with the execution of your commands, which might with more certainty have been effected by an order to the commanding officer of the brigade stationed at Burrampoor. But this would have been productive of much disturbance. I was convinced that I might securely rely on Mr. Middleton, and his behaviour justified that confidence. Indeed I am bound in justice to bear the same testimony to his faithful attention to your interests in many other instances which I have had occasion to experience of his subsequent conduct, in which he has shown himself a zealous asserter of your rights, and a supporter of the authority of your government.

Your public records will inform you that Mahommed Reza Cawn was brought without delay to Calcutta,

where he has been detained ever since in an easy confinement; that it was judged advisable and consistent with the tenor of your commands, that Rajah Shitab Roy should be arrested, and brought likewise to Calcutta. For the particulars of these transactions, and the debates concerning them, I beg leave to refer you to the proceedings themselves, which will better explain than I can the motives which influenced the resolutions of the Board, and the opinions of the different members upon them. Something more may be necessary to be said concerning my own conduct, which, as it was grounded solely on the several instructions which you had been pleased to give me for my guidance, become a proper subject of this address.

It may at first sight appear extraordinary that Mahommed Reza Cawn and Rajah Shitab Roy have been so long detained in confinement without any proofs having been obtained of their guilt, or measures taken to bring them to a trial. Very valid reasons for this delay have been assigned in our minutes. I beg leave to call to your recollection, that by a strange concurrence of unforeseen causes, your administration had at this time every object that could engage the care of government, war only excepted—all demanding their instant attention:—the dismission of the Naib Dewan and Naib Subah of the provinces; the enquiry into his conduct for a course of years preceding; the dismission of the Naib Dewan of Bahar, and enquiry into his conduct; the establishment of the Dewannee on the plan directed by the Honourable Company; the arrangement of the Nabob's household; the reduction of his allowance and expenses; the establishment of a regular administration of justice throughout the province; the inspection and reformation of the offices at the presidency: and independent of all these, the ordinary duties of the presidency, which, from the amazing growth of

your affairs, were of themselves sufficient to occupy the whole time and application which we could bestow upon them, and even more than we could bestow, from the want of a regular system, the natural consequence of the rapidity with which these affairs have accumulated. So circumstanced, we were under an absolute necessity to leave many affairs suspended that we might give due despatch to the rest. The first in immediate consequence claimed our immediate regard; this was the settlement of the revenue. It was late in the season; the lands had suffered unheard of depopulation by the famine and mortality of 1769. The collections, violently kept up to their former standard, had added to the distress of the country, and threatened a general decay of the revenue, unless immediate remedies were applied to prevent it. The farming system, for a course of years subjected to proper checks and regulations, seemed the most likely to afford relief to the country, and both to ascertain and produce the real value of the lands without violence to the ryots. It was therefore resolved that this business should first take place, and it was deemed necessary for this purpose that a committee, composed of the members of the Council, should be appointed to carry it into execution. The arrangements of the Dewannee and the regulation of the Nabob's household were added to the charge of the Committee, and as these comprehended the most valuable parts of your concerns, it was thought proper that I, as president, should be joined with it. This rendered it necessary to suspend the trials of Mahommed Reza Cawn and Rajah Shitab Roy, and this reason is assigned for it in our minutes. Neither Mahommed Reza Cawn nor Rajah Shitab Roy complain of the delay as a hardship. Perhaps all parties, as is usual in most cases of a public concern, had their secret views, which on this occasion, though opposite in their

direction, fortunately concurred in the same point. These had conceived hopes of a relaxation of the Company's orders; Mahommed Reza Cawn had even buoyed himself up with the hopes of a restoration to his former authority by the interest of his friends, and a change in the Direction, and his letters and the letters of his Dewan to the city declared these expectations. I pretend not to enter into the views of others, my own were these: Mahommed Reza Cawn's influence still prevailed generally throughout the country; in the Nabob's household and at the capital it was scarce affected by his present disgrace; his favour was still courted, and his anger dreaded. Who, under such discouragements, would give information or evidence against him? His agents and creatures filled every office of the Nizamut and Dewannee; how was the truth of his conduct to be investigated by these? It would be superfluous to add other arguments to show the necessity of prefacing the inquiry by breaking his influence, removing his dependents, and putting the direction of all the affairs which had been committed to his care, into the hands of the most powerful or active of his enemies. With this view too the institution of the new Dewannee obviously coincided. These were my real motives for postponing the inquiry. Whether my precautions will have their effect is yet a question of doubt.

The same principles guided me, though not uninfluenced by other arguments of great force, in the choice of Munny Begum, the widow of the Nabob Meer Jaffier, and of Rajah Goordass, the son of Mahrajah Nund Comar, the former for the chief administration, the latter for the Dewannee of the Nabob's household, both the declared enemies of Mahommed Reza Cawn. To the latter indeed I was principally inclined by your commands, and I hope it will appear that I

have adopted almost the only expedient in which they could be exactly fulfilled. You directed that " if the assistance and information of Nund Comar should be serviceable to me in my investigating the conduct of Mahommed Reza Cawn, I should yield him such encouragements and reward as his trouble and the extent of his services may deserve." There is no doubt that Nund Comar is capable of affording me great services by his information and advice; but it is on his abilities, and on the activity of his ambition and hatred to Mahommed Reza Cawn that I depend for investigating the conduct of the latter, and by eradicating his influence for confirming the authority which you have assumed in the administration of the affairs of this country. The reward which has been assigned him will put it fully in his power to answer these expectations, and will be an encouragement to him to exert all his abilities for the accomplishment of them. Had I not been guarded by the caution which you have been pleased to enjoin me, yet my own knowledge of the character of Nund Comar would have restrained me from yielding him any trust or authority which could prove detrimental to the Company's interests. He himself has no trust or authority, but in the ascendancy which he naturally possesses over his son. An attempt to abuse the favour which has been shown him cannot escape unnoticed, and if detected may ruin all his hopes. The son is of a disposition very unlike his father, placid, gentle, and without disguise. From him there can be no danger.

You will perceive by the records that this appointment has not taken place without opposition from a majority of the gentlemen who form the committee now at this place. I know not whether you will approve or disapprove of the silence which I have observed with respect to your orders, in the arguments which I have

used in support of my recommendation. My reason was, that I thought the measure in itself so proper that I did not doubt of its receiving the confirmation of the Board at large, and unless some material advantage could be gained by it, I did not think myself at liberty to divulge your secret commands. I am at this time most firmly persuaded that no other measure whatever would have been likely to prove so effectual either for promoting the inquiry which you have directed or giving strength and duration to the new system.

I hope I shall not appear to assume too much importance in speaking thus much of myself in justification of the motives which led to this recommendation; that I had no connexion with Nund Comar or his family prior to the receipt of your letter by the Lapwing; that, on the contrary, from the year 1759 to the time when I left Bengal in 1764, I was engaged in a continued opposition to the interests and designs of that man, because I judged him to be adverse to the welfare of my employers; and in the course of this contention I received sufficient indications of his ill will to have made me an irreconcileable enemy, if I could suffer my passions to supersede the duty which I owe to the Company. My support of Nund Comar on the present occasion could not, therefore, proceed from partiality. It will be as obvious that my preference of him to other competitors could not arise from interested motives. I may be charged with inconsistency, but the reasons which I have urged in the minute of the committee in support of this measure will, I trust, acquit me to my honourable employers; and if my conduct shall stand the test of their judgment, it is a point of duty to bear with the reproaches of the uninformed part of the world. To the service of the Company, and to your commands, I have sacrificed my own feelings (pardon the presumption of this repeti-

tion), and I have combated those of others joined with me in the administration of your affairs. I claim your approbation of what I have done, not as a recompense of integrity, but as the confirmation of the authority which you have been pleased to confide in me, and of your own which is involved in it.

I with pleasure do justice to the committee in declaring that, strenuously as they opposed the measure while it was a point of debate, it had no sooner received the sanction of your Council than they all concurred with me in supporting both that and the other resolutions which were connected with it, as steadily as if they had never dissented from it.

The appointment of Munny Begum, I believe, will require no apology. It was unanimously approved, and if I can be a judge of the public opinion, it is a measure of general satisfaction.

The only man who could pretend to such a trust was the Nabob Yesterâm o' Dowla, the brother of Meer Jaffier, a man, indeed, of no dangerous abilities, nor apparent ambition, but the father of a numerous family, who by his being brought so nigh to the musnud would have acquired a right of inheritance to the subahship; and if only one of his sons, who are all in the prime of life, should have raised his hopes to the succession, it would have been in his power at any time to remove the single obstacle which the Nabob's life opposed to the advancement of his family. The guardian at least would have been the Nazim while the minority lasted, and all the advantages which the Company may hope to derive from it in the confirmation of their power would have been lost, or could only have been maintained by a contention hurtful to their rights, or by a violence yet more exceptionable. The case would be much the same were any other man placed in that station.

The truth is that the affairs of the Company stand at present on a footing which can neither last as it is, nor be maintained on the rigid principles of private justice. You must establish your own power, or you must hold it dependent on a superior, which I deem to be impossible.

The Begum, as a woman, is incapable of passing the bounds assigned her; her ambition cannot aspire to higher dignity. She has no children to provide for, or mislead her fidelity; her actual authority rests on the Nabob's life, and therefore cannot endanger it. It must cease with his minority, when she must depend absolutely on the Company for support against her ward and pupil, who will then become her master. Of course her interest must lead her to concur with all the designs of the Company, and to solicit their patronage. I have the pleasure to add that, in the exercise of her office, she has already shown herself amply qualified for it, by her discernment, economy, and a patient attention to affairs.

In the execution of your commands of the 8th May, 1771, I hope I shall not appear to you to have been guilty of remissness. The inquiry therein directed I have been obliged to entrust to the previous consideration of a Committee, the many weightier affairs of your Government rendering it absolutely impossible for me to enter on a scrutiny of that nature myself, which, however, I mean to take up as soon as I conveniently can after my return to the presidency. I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient and faithful servant.

From the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors to Warren Hastings, Esq., our President and Governor of Bengal.

London, 16th April, 1773.

1. We have received by the Nottingham your letter addressed to our secret committee, dated at Cossim-

buzar, the 1st September, 1772, informing us of the measures you had adopted for carrying into execution the orders of the secret committee, dated 28th of August, 1771, and of the arrangements and regulations which you deemed necessary for the public peace and welfare of the provinces. And although the public records to which you refer us are not come to hand, we assure you that, so far as we are enabled to judge of your proceedings by your own letter, and by that of our Council, received by the same conveyance, they appear to us in the most favourable light, the steps you have taken judicious, and indeed the whole of your conduct seems to have fully justified the choice of the secret committee, who entrusted to your management the execution of a plan of the utmost importance.

2. We have been long sensible of the utter impropriety of lodging an absolute power in the hands of Mahommed Reza Khân, but the remedy was not without its difficulties; we trust the evil is on the point of being eradicated. Inconveniences generally attend great and sudden alterations; but we dare hope that your agency will render them as few, as temporary, and as light as possible.

3. Although you will observe that sundry changes have lately taken place in the direction of the Company's affairs at home, those changes will not in the least affect the measures in which you are engaged; on the contrary, we take this early opportunity not only of testifying our entire approbation of your conduct but of assuring you of our firmest support in accomplishing the work you have so successfully commenced; and we doubt not but it will issue in the deliverance of Bengal from oppression, in the establishment of our credit, influence, and interest in India; and consequently in every advantage which the Company or the nation may justly expect from so important a transaction.

4. As you have distinctly marked in your letter those objects of inquiry and regulation which we should otherwise have pointed out to you, we assure ourselves that you will prosecute your inquiries with steadiness, impartiality, and to full effect, notwithstanding the many difficulties and temptations which we are sensible may be thrown in the way of persons engaged in inquiries of this nature in order to weaken their zeal for the public good, and to render their endeavours ineffectual for the great purposes of reformation.

5. Your attention to the settlement of the revenues, as a primary object, has our entire approbation; and it is with the utmost satisfaction we observe, that the farming system will be generally adopted, more especially as the researches and discoveries made in the two preceding years must have nearly ascertained the value and produce of the lands, so that imposition on the part of the farmers respecting the value of the lands, and oppression of the tenants, may, we hope be easily avoided.

6. The extirpation of Mahommed Reza Khân's influence was absolutely necessary, and the apprehending of Shitab Roy equally so, as the latter had been too long connected with Mahommed Reza Khân to be independent of him; but if that had not been the case, it would have been absurd to continue a Naib Dewan in the province of Bahar after abolishing that office in Bengal; and as to any hopes which Mahommed Reza Khân may entertain of profiting by changes in the Court of Directors, those hopes must speedily vanish: for however different their sentiments may be in some particulars, they heartily concur in the propriety and necessity of setting him aside, and of putting the administration of the Company's affairs in the hands of persons who may be rendered responsible in England for their conduct in India.

7. Your choice of the Begum for guardian to the Nabob we entirely approve; the use you intend making of Nundcomar is very proper, and it affords us great satisfaction to find that you could at once determine to suppress all personal resentment when the public welfare seemed to clash with your private sentiments relative to Nundcomar.

8. We observe with great pleasure the testimonial given by you of Mr. Middleton; you will assure him of our entire approbation of his conduct on this occasion. And as the committee have concurred heartily in supporting a measure, which, in the course of debate, the majority had strenuously opposed, we cannot be dissatisfied with their conduct unless the perusal of their debates should oblige us to alter our opinion respecting them.

9. As the shortness of our time will not permit us to be more particular, we can only repeat to you our assurances of protection and support, in carrying into full execution the arrangements you have so happily begun; and as we desire particularly that you will distinguish and encourage merit wherever you find it, so do we most strictly conjure you, not to suffer rank, station, or any connexion or consideration whatever to deter you from bringing every oppression to light, and every offender, native or European, to condign punishment.

10. If the abolition of the office of Naib Dewan, and stepping forth as principals, should in any degree alarm your European neighbours, we rely on your prudence for removing every improper jealousy that may be entertained on this account.

11. Notwithstanding this letter is signed by us, the Court of Directors, we mean it as secret, and transmit it confidentially to you only; and we leave it to your discretion, to lay the contents or any part thereof

before the Council, if circumstances should, in your opinion, render it necessary, or if you should judge it for our interest so to do, and not otherwise. We are your loving friends.

I cannot better conclude this chapter than with the following letter to Mr. Du Pré. It is written with all the openness of a long established friendship; and as it gives a general view of Mr. Hastings's policy, in a very important branch of his administration, up to a certain date, both the reader and myself are saved by it from following details which it might be necessary to give, but which I could not hope to render interesting.

To the Honourable JOSIAS DUPRE, Esq.

Fort William, 8th October, 1772.

Dear Sir,—I beg you will not attribute it to any fault, intentional at least, of mine, that I have suffered so many of your letters to lie so long unanswered. I shall not attempt an excuse, for I can neither describe the state of my mind, or the life I have led for some months past. I should consider it as a misfortune were this to be the means of my losing the pleasure of hearing from you. I am thankful to you that I have not, for I can truly assure you that I received more comfort from your letters, than from any written thing on this side of the Cape, or perhaps on the other. I have received your two letters by Captain Gore. I think I may venture to promise that you shall see him, at least by Christmas-day. It shall be Aldersey's fault, as I have told him, if you do not. I shall claim the merit of it if you do. I have found Mr. Aldersey such as you represent him, a man of more useful talents than many who pass themselves upon the world as clever fellows. He is friendly, hearty, and capable.

I confess I am interested enough to wish you may change your mind and stay another year, because if you do, I know it will be from motives that will do you credit, and because I shall be, or think myself, secure of having added to my present perplexities, a share in those of Fort St. George. I cannot help thinking that you may receive an invitation from the Directors to remain, as they have let their resentment drop so lightly, and have yet thought of no person for your successor.

I will endeavour to give you in as few words as I can, the sum of all the transactions and events in this quarter since I have been an actor in them. They may amuse by their novelty and variety. During the remainder of Mr. Cartier's government, I endeavoured to inform myself of the nature and state of the revenues, and formed a set of regulations for the management of them for the ensuing five years, the first proposition being to let them for that term in farms. It was unanimously approved, and a committee appointed to examine each district, and to form the settlement of each on these grounds.

In the mean time, the Lapwing arrived with orders to bring Mahommed Reza Cawn to Calcutta, and to accuse him of frauds, embezzlements, and adding to the late famine by a monopoly of rice. Rajah Shitabroy the Dewan of Patna, being nearly in the same predicament with respect to the suspicion of embezzling the revenue, it was judged necessary to extend the same orders to him. They were both accordingly brought down prisoners, the former by my authority unknown to the Board, the Court's orders being addressed to me alone, which I did not chuse to expose to a contest, by communicating them till they were executed. A contest arose about the mode of receiving him. The majority agreed that a member of the Board should

meet him, a measure which I suspect those who proposed it are now sorry for. Our evenings were mostly employed during all this time in regulating the different offices, and retrenching the expenses, a work which has stood still for these four months past, but which I hope we shall soon resume and accomplish.

In our military retrenchments we cut off at once all our cavalry, which has engaged us in a violent squabble with the general, who attacked us very impetuously upon it; but happily the Directors in their last letters have unknowingly justified the measure by ordering it to be done, and assigning nearly the same reasons that we had given for it.

I have before told you of an order which the general had given to the first brigade to march into the Vizier's dominions, which the Board disapproved and forbade the brigade to proceed. This also has been a matter of much uneasiness between us, it being asserted on our side that besides the irregularity of the act, there was no necessity for it, since it was not probable the Mahrattas would invade the Vizier's dominions; on the other, that it was necessary, as was proved by their not daring to approach the Vizier, through fear of the brigade.

On the 3d of June I set out with the committee. We made the first visit to Kissemnagur, the capital of Nuddeea, and formed the settlement of that district, farming it in divisions for five years. We proceeded next to the city, where we arrived the last of the month: here a variety of occupations detained me till the 15th of last month; two months and a half. This period was employed in settling the collections, and the government of the districts dependant on Moorshedabad, which were large, very numerous, and intricate; in reducing the Nabob's stipend from thirty-two lacs to sixteen, a work which ought to have taken place in January last;

in reducing his pension list, and other expenses; in forming, recommending, and executing a new arrangement of his household; and in framing a new system for conducting the business of the Dewannee, or revenue. These two last operations will not be understood without some enlargement.

When the Company dismissed Mahommed Reza Cawn from his employment of Naib Dewan, they also directed that the Nabob should be applied to, to divest him of his post of Naib Subah, which was accordingly done. They declared their resolution to stand forth as Dewan themselves, left it to the direction of the Board to place the management of the collections on a proper footing, and conformable to that resolution, ordered that an ostensible minister should be appointed to act in cases where the other companies were concerned; that another Naib Subah should be recommended, and that every caution should be taken to eradicate the influence of Mahommed Reza Cawn. On these grounds the committee proceeded to the following arrangements:—

Munny Begum, the widow of old Jaffier, was proposed for the superintendency of the Nabob's household, and guardianship of his person. Raja Goordas, the son of Nundcomar, (whose name you are probably acquainted with,) to assist her in quality of Dewan. This nomination was opposed by a majority of the committee, but approved by the Board, which unanimously confirmed that of the Begum. The execution of these measures was a matter of much delicacy, because the Nabob's servants were in possession, and his mother was considered as the head of the family. However, by avoiding every appearance of violence, and by a proper address to the Nabob's counsellors, he was easily induced, with a very good grace, and

without opposition, to give his assent to the appointments, which were conferred in form in the presence of the committee. I should have mentioned that it had been previously resolved in the Nabob's council, that he should solemnly protest against them, claim the administration of his own affairs, or declare his resolution to abdicate the government and retire to Calcutta; he did neither. I had the honour some time afterwards to reconcile the two ladies, and to bring about a meeting between them; an event from which I claim some merit, although I do not imagine there is a grain of affection subsisting between them.

The office of Naib Subah is abolished, because the person invested with it would of course become the principal, as Mahommed Reza Cawn did. The Begum is equal to the charge of directing the Nabob's household, and both she and her Dewan are the inveterate enemies of Mahommed Reza Cawn; of course the fittest persons to eradicate his influence, which was still great. I expect to be much abused for my choice of the Dewan, because his father stands convicted of treason against the Company, while he was the servant of Meer Jaffier, and I helped to convict him. The man never was a favourite of mine, and was engaged in doing me many ill offices for seven years together. But I found him the only man who could enable me to fulfil the expectations of the Company, with respect to Mahommed Reza Cawn; and I had other reasons which will fully justify me when I can make them known. For these and those I supported his son, who is to benefit by his abilities and influence; but the father is to be allowed no authority, lest people should be suspicious of his abusing it. The opposition which I met with in this business, and my success, have done me much service with the people of the country, who

had been convinced that I had no more than a vote in the Council, and that others had more by an invincible combination against me.

For the better management of the dewannee, it was proposed and agreed to, to bring the collections to Calcutta. Thither, too, we have brought the superior courts of justice; we have established two at the presidency for appeals of civil causes, and for the inspection and confirmation of all proceedings in capital cases; and two inferior courts of the like kind in each district. By these arrangements the whole power and government of the province will centre in Calcutta, which may now be considered as the capital of Bengal. The establishment of the courts of justice in Calcutta was almost an act of injustice, the criminal judicature being a branch of the Nizamut. But it was so connected with the revenue, and the Mahometan courts are so abominably venal, that it was necessary; it met with no opposition, and it is now a point determined, although neither of these courts have yet begun to exercise their functions for want of proper places to sit in. Unfortunately too, a new judicature and a new code of laws are framing at home, on principles diametrically opposite to ours, which is little more than a renewal of the laws and forms established of old in the country, with no other variation than such as was necessary to give them their due effect, and such as the people understood and were likely to be pleased with.

Loaded with all these materials, I returned to Calcutta. The rest of the committee proceeded to visit the other districts, Mr. Middleton excepted, who remained to keep peace and order at the city.

Here I now am, with arrears of business of months, and some of years to bring up; with the courts of justice and offices of revenue to set a going; with the

official reformation to resume and complete; with the Lapwing to despatch; with the trials of Mahommed Reza Cawn and Raja Shitabroy to bring on, without materials, and without much hope of assistance (*On ne pend pas des gens qui ont un million dans leur poche*), and with the current trifles of the day, notes, letters, personal applications, every man's business of more consequence than any other, complainants from every quarter of the province hallooing me by hundreds for justice as often as I put my head out of window, or venture abroad, and, what is worse than all, a mind discomposed, and a temper almost fermented to vinegar by the weight of affairs to which the former is unequal, and by everlasting teazing. We go on, however, though slowly; and in the hopes of support at home, and of an easier time here when proper channels are cut for the affairs of the province to flow in, I persevere. Neither my health nor spirits, thank God, have yet forsaken me. I should have added to the list of things to be done, an inquiry into the trade in salt, betel nut, tobacco, and rice, carried on by the principal persons of this Government, which their commands have directed me to prosecute, a mark of distinction on which my friends in England congratulate me. Such partial powers tend to destroy every other that I am possessed of, by arming my hand against every man, and every man's of course against me.

In our political state you are interested. The Vizier has declared his intentions to attack the Mahrattas, lest they should begin with him, and has demanded the aid of our forces to join in the prosecution of that design. We have promised him a force for the protection of his country, but have declared, in plain and peremptory terms, that it shall not pass his borders, nor join him in an offensive war. He indirectly threatens to join the Mahrattas, but we shall abide by our first determination.

CHAPTER VIII.

Settlement of the Provinces—Arrangement of the Nabob's Household—Ma-hommed Reza Cawn and Shitab Roy subjected to Trial—General Corre-spondence.

Thus far in the month of October, that is to say, within the short space of half a year from the date of his accession to office, Mr. Hastings had proceeded towards the accomplishment of the Herculean task which his employers had committed to him. Their principal object was to infuse, through his means, so much of new life into their own affairs as to deprive the King's government of all pretext to claim a right of interference with them. His designs tended not only to accomplish this, but to render the European's dominion a blessing to the multitudes over whom it was extended, while at the same time it should prove a source of permanent and increasing benefit to the English Company and the English nation. From the letter with which I closed the preceding chapter a correct notion will have been formed of the general results of his endeavours to remodel the system under which the land revenues were collected. But the adjustment of that point, though doubtless of the first importance, was not the only matters which put in strong claims u pon Mr. Hastings'

attention. As has been elsewhere explained, the administration of justice had become so defective throughout the provinces, that beyond the limits of Calcutta and the districts immediately dependant on it, there was no protection anywhere for life or property. Commerce, too, and especially the inland trade, on which the natives chiefly depended for their prosperity, and their rulers for no trivial portion of their revenues, was all but extinct. Then again the foreign relations of the empire—for such it may now be called—were not satisfactory, and there were many difficulties and impediments in the way of improving them. I say nothing of the settlement which he was required to make of the Nabob's domestic concerns—of the investigation which had been ordered into the past conduct of those by whom the Nabob's government used to be administered—of the retrenchments to which the proprietors looked in every department of the state, civil as well as military—and above all, of their extreme anxiety on the score of the investments, and of the dividends, which were entirely dependant on them. These were all, to Mr. Hastings, subjects of anxious care; and to the adjustment of all he applied himself with a vigour which held out the best prospects of success. I do not know that I am required to preface the following letters with any remarks from myself explanatory of their contents. They seem to me to carry on

the history of the writer's public life with singular accuracy, and the tone which pervades them is surely excellent throughout. I therefore insert them in the order of their dates.

To JOSIAS DUPRE, Esq.

Fort William, 6th January, 1773.

Dear Sir,—I have already given you a brief history of the most material events of this government since my appointment to the charge of it. I have long wished to communicate to you our proceedings at large upon such points as are most likely to interest the attention either of the Company or of the public, in the hopes of profiting by your advice and opinion upon them for my future conduct; and if you were fixed in your resolution for returning to England, that you might be furnished with complete materials to judge of the propriety of our measures, assuring myself that I should be supported by your voice in my favour if you thought I deserved it. Some scruples about the regularity of parting with the records of the Company have hitherto withheld me; but as these were not the scruples of my own conscience, but of the consciences of others, which are always the most tender in the judgment which they form of actions in which they have no concern; and as I have nothing to impart to you but facts as notorious as the light of the sun, and reasonings upon those facts, which of course can be as little secret to those who choose to exercise their understandings upon them—I am satisfied in my own mind with the rectitude of my intention, which aims at no more than the support of the measures which I believe to be necessary to the Company's interest and of my own reputation, as it depends on the approbation which my conduct may meet with; and I rely on your secrecy for preventing the objections of others. Some-

thing I ought in decency to add by way of excuse for giving you so much trouble, but I persuade myself you will not regret it, and I have already said too much for a mere preface, and am ashamed of it. What I have to say upon the business of this letter shall be brief.

I have desired Colonel Campbell to take charge of a packet which he will deliver to you with this. It contains the following extracts from the proceedings of the board and of the committee appointed to make the circuit of the lands of Bengal.

No. 1 contains the plan and regulations for the settlement of the revenue of this province. This is the ground-work of all our subsequent proceedings. It is sufficiently explained in the commentary placed opposite to each article of the regulations. Who was it that said that he had given such laws to his people as they were capable of receiving, not the best that could be framed? On a similar principle we have suffered one capital defect to remain in our constitution—I mean the collectors. Do not laugh at the formality with which we have made a law to change their name from *supervisors* to *collectors*. You know full well how much the world's opinion is governed by names. They were originally what the word supervisor imports, simple *lookers-on,* without trust or authority. They became *collectors,* and ceased to be *lookers-on;* but though this change had taken place two years before I arrived, yet I found, to my astonishment, that they were known to the Court of Directors only in their original character. It was necessary to undeceive the Company; and to that end we have called these officers by a title which will convey the true idea of the nature of their office. It was once intended to withdraw the collectors entirely. They monopolize the trade of the country, and of course prevent the return of specie by trade, since they trade with the amount of their per-

quisites. These perquisites I believe to be an oppression on the people and an obstruction of the revenue. They are most of them the agents of their own banyans, and they are devils. And as the collectorships are more lucrative than any posts in the service (the government itself not excepted—whatever it may prove hereafter), we cannot get a man of abilities to conduct the official business of the presidency without violence; for who would rest satisfied with a handsome salary of three or four thousand rupees a-year to maintain him in Calcutta, who could get a lac or three lacs, which I believe have been acquired in that space, and live at no expense, in the districts? But whatever motives we had for recalling these officers, it appeared that there were amongst them so many sons, cousins, or *élèves* of directors, and intimates of the members of the Council, that it was better to let them remain than provoke an army of opponents against every act of administration, by depriving them of their emoluments. They continue, but their power is retrenched; and the way is paved for their gradual removal; and the Court of Directors have sufficient arguments furnished them to order their recall immediately.

No. 2 contains the regulations of the Nabob's household, the appointment of Munny Begum as guardian, and of Rajah Goordass as Dewan to the Nabob; also the removal of the Khalsa (or the Supreme Court of Revenue) from Murshedabad to Calcutta. These are very different subjects, but they have been copied together, and are therefore marked as one number.

The appointment of the Begum was unanimously agreed to by all the members of the board. She has no children or relations to provide for, or to intrigue for. Her power must at some time expire, and then the Nabob will be her greatest enemy, because she now rules him. We want the time of his minority to

establish and confirm the Company's authority in the country; and as all her future hopes of protection rest solely in the Company, there is no fear of her opposing our measures or thwarting our views. Indeed, she assents to everything; and I do not think we have been unreasonable; for the power we assume is no more than the safety and peace of the country indispensably requires. The Nabob had some troublesome people about him, who had instructed him to protest against this arrangement; but by a proper address to them they were intimidated, and he of course acquiesced in everything. We were careful to avoid every appearance of violence; and therefore, though the committee went to the Nabob's palace in form, we had not a sepoy with us, nor scarcely the usual retinue of chubdars and other unarmed attendants; so that everything passed without noise, nor was a murmur heard without the Perdas of the Zenâna. You will easily perceive of how much advantage this was to our credit; and how the general courts would have rung with declarations against our perfidy, violation of justice, &c. &c. had we acted with more eclat, or assumed but the appearance of violence. I must observe that the Nabob has very near male relations; but they would most probably have employed their authority, (had any such been invested with the trust given to the Begum,) and the Nabob's wealth, in getting into his place, as Mahommed Reza Cawn in effect did, nor could we have been sure of so passive an administration.

The appointment of Rajah Goordass was not so well approved of. His father did us many ill offices in the time of Meer Jaffier; and when I was in Bengal before, I rejected every offer of reconciliation with him. I still dislike him, although I countenance and employ him. I had secret motives, in addition to those which I have assigned, for the promotion of his son. I cannot

relate them; but the latter are alone, in my judgment, sufficient to justify my choice. The arguments which were urged against the proposal have great force. I need not desire that no other person may see or know that you have seen them.

I can add nothing to the reasons recorded in the proceedings of the committee for the removal of the seat of the collections to Calcutta. It has exceedingly added to my labours; but I have hitherto every reason to be pleased with the change. The board of revenue at Moorshedabad, though composed of the junior servants of the Company, was superior, before this alteration, to the Governor and Council of the presidency. Calcutta is now the capital of Bengal, and every office and trust of the province issues from it.

No. 3 contains the arrangement of the officers dependant on the Khalsa, or Court of Revenue. It is nearly the same with those formerly established at Moorshedabad, but with much fewer offices and fewer servants. The few innovations in point of form which this court has received are such only as were necessary to adapt it to the general system, and to give the members of the Council that knowledge and control of the business which might prevent its falling under improper influence; and the superintendence being divided, and of short duration, is not so liable to be abused. The officers are completely established, and the business in as good a train as could possibly be expected so soon after so great a revolution. We have found it advisable also to form a new and distinct department for the business of the revenue, with a separate council house, secretary, and offices; and it is with pleasure I can add, that this department is as regular and as much on train as if it had existed since the days of Job Channock.

No. 4 contains the establishment and regulations for

the administration of justice. The only material changes which we have made in the ancient constitution of the country are in dividing the jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases by clearer lines than were formerly drawn between them, and in removing the supreme courts of justice to Calcutta. There are other trivial innovations, which will appear in comparing the ancient forms of judicature as they are described in the letter to the Board with the regulations; but the spirit of the constitution we have preserved entire. Our interfering in the courts of the Nizâmut, or the criminal courts, is an usurpation, but we could not avoid it. Had we left them to the Nabob, they would have been made the sources of venality and oppression, and our collections would have been perpetually interrupted by their officers. The collectors, zemindars, and farmers would have been for ever quarrelling with their ministers and disputing their authority. It would be endless to enumerate all the evils which would have attended the exercise of a power which could not support itself nor enforce its own decrees, and subsisted only by the sufferance of a power which was its rival. To avoid a great evil, and that justice might have a footing by hook or by crook in Bengal, we chose the less evil, and took her under our own protection; but, to obviate the reproach of irregularity, we have recommended the officers of the superior, or Nizâmut Adawlat, to the Nabob, and receive his sunnud for their appointment. The completion of this work has been much retarded by the multitude of agents to whom it has been entrusted, the old offices and forms which were to be abolished to make way for it, and the thousand little doubts and objections that started up with every step that we made. It is at length nearly concluded.

We have been very unfortunate in the time which we have chosen for our judicial improvements, for we

cannot undo what we have done; and if the Lord Chief Justice and his judges should come amongst us with their institutes, the Lord have mercy upon us! We shall be in a complete state of confusion here, and we shall be cruelly mauled at home, especially if the Parliament should lay hold on our code, for we have not a lawyer among us. Necessity compelled us to form some establishment of justice; we chose the best we could; and if this shall not be found so perfect as more time and more knowledge might have made it, it is yet capable of receiving improvement, and is a good foundation for a more complete system of judicature. Is it not a contradiction of the common notions of equity and policy that the English gentlemen of Cumberland and Argyleshire should regulate the polity of a nation which they know only by the lacs which it has sent to Great Britain, and by the reduction which it has occasioned in their land-tax?

No. 5 is an appendix to the last, and the last act of the Board on that subject.

I neither desire nor expect that you will read these folios now. If you can make them an amusement in your voyage, as they are not totally devoid of originality, it is all I can wish. You will perceive by these papers, and by the constant tenor of my letters, that I have made the revenue my principal object. It has been my study, for indeed I had the whole science to learn when I first engaged in it. I think I have not laboured unsuccessfully, as I seldom find myself embarrassed by any point of it that comes before me; my next care shall be to divest it of the mystery and perplexity in which it is at present involved, and to make it intelligible to the Court of Directors. The political line which I have drawn for my conduct has a relation to the good of the revenue—peace. In this my inclinations are happily and heartily seconded by those of the

Board. I fear the cession of Cora to the Mahrattas may compel us to a war; but I am resolved it shall not be begun on our part, if I can prevent it. A few years of peace and quiet population will retrieve all the losses which this country has sustained by the famine, although that has swept off near one half of its inhabitants. The decay of its trade, and the diminution of its currency, require many years and a better regulated government than this is to repair them. The effects of these we at this time feel severely in some of the northern districts, whose collections are at a stand for want of purchasers for the grain which has been produced this year—everywhere in uncommon abundance.

I will not trouble you longer. If you will tell me that I have your permission, I wish to inform you from time to time of the occurrences of this government, and shall think myself obliged by a line from you with your sentiments upon them.

I beg you will present my compliments to Mrs. Dupré. I shall be glad if you can make me useful in executing any commands which either she or yourself may have here. May health and happiness attend you. I am, with the sincerest esteem and affection, dear Sir, &c. &c.

The following letter tells its own tale. It refers to the proceedings of an adventurer at the Mogul court, who endeavoured to raise himself into importance by working on the credulity of the Asiatic Emperor and the cupidity of the king's government at home. He was destitute of the talent necessary for playing such a game, and he soon sank into insignificance.

To Sir GEORGE COLEBROOKE.

Fort William, 14th January, 1773, per Prince of Wales.

Sir,—You will learn from our general letters, and from our records in the secret department and select committee, that Major John Morrison, late an officer in the Company's service, who resigned his commission in 177—, and obtained the permission of this government to proceed by land to Europe, had accepted a commission in the army of the King Shaw Allum, and was since returned to Bengal in the character, whether real or assumed, of ambassador from that prince to the court of Great Britain.

On his arrival at Chinsurah he wrote me a letter formally notifying his appointment, requiring of me to let him know whether I would receive him in his public character, and demanding a passage in one of the Company's ships to England. I wrote him in reply, with the advice of the select committee, that I would neither receive him in his public character, nor allow him a passage in any vessel belonging to this port. My letter might have contained an unlimited acquiescence in his demands with equal effect, for it was returned unopened, with a second letter from him explaining his reasons for this behaviour, which were, that I had addressed him simply by the title of *Major John Morrison,* instead of giving him the rank which he bore by his present commission, or that of *Captain,* which he held in the service of his Britannic Majesty, and concluding with an apology regarding myself, which is certainly no reparation of the insult offered to me in my public character. These letters are copied in our select committee proceedings. A translation of the letter which he is said to bear from Shaw Allum is entered on our consultations, and went in the last packet. It is a production equally replete with the

basest treachery and ingratitude. Of all the powers of Indostan, the English alone have really acknowledged the King's authority; they invested him with the royalty he now possesses; they conquered for him and gave him a territory; they paid him an annual tribute, the only pledge of fealty which he has ever received, of twenty-six lacs of rupees, (£325,000 sterling,) while the trade and revenue of their own provinces suffered a visible decay by this diminution of their specie, and they were compelled to pay a yearly interest of ten lacs for money borrowed, to furnish their investment and defray the current expenses of their government; yet, because we suspended the payment of this tribute, when the provinces of Bengal and Bahar had lost nearly one half of their inhabitants by the mortality of 1770, and the survivors in many parts were unable to pay their rents by the want of purchasers, and of money to purchase the produce of their harvests, and when he had made himself an instrument of the Mahrattas who threatened the dominions of our ally and our own with their devastations; such was the infatuation of this ill-advised man, that, regardless of all the bounties which he had received from the only power which had ever treated him with the least degree of kindness, he considered himself as robbed of his right, and as a retribution to his benefactors, or as a resource for his own wants, he formed the project of making a tender of their property to the King their sovereign, on the condition of the like pecuniary homage as the Company has hitherto paid him, and the little less expensive vassalage of military service. With these insolent and incendiary propositions is Major Morrison said to be charged, and now preparing to embark for England.

At any other period such a project, and the authors of it, would have been treated with contempt; but I confess I see so near a similitude between the offers of

the King and the claims of the ministers of our own court on the government of Fort St. George, that I could not but be alarmed for the consequences with which they might be attended, and I judged it of the most essential importance to prevent Major Morrison, if possible, from arriving in England before the Court of Directors could be furnished with full intelligence of his errand, and have had time to take the necessary measures for obviating their effect. Understanding that he had taken his passage in a Danish ship lately bound for Europe, I applied to Mr. Bie, a gentleman of the Superior Council of Tranquebar, deputed to regulate the affairs of the Danish Company in Bengal, and through his means obtained an order from the factory of Fredericnagore forbidding his admission in their vessel, and I promised to represent to the Court of Directors this instance of the ready attention shown by those gentlemen to the interests of our Company. I herewith enclose you copies of Mr. Bie's letters to me, with the correspondence of the Council of Fredericnagore with Major Morrison, and my answer. I do not think it necessary to take any further steps in this business; what I have done is sufficient for the purpose which I intended. I neither wish to detain him in India, nor indeed is it possible. He continues at Chinsurah, and I am told, but by doubtful authority, purposes to apply to Admiral Harland, to be received on board one of the King's ships which may return this year to England.

As I know not what construction may be put on this detention of Major Morrison in England, I have taken no notice of it on our proceedings, choosing rather to hazard the consequences of it in my own person than, by making it an act of government, involve the Company in trouble by my indiscretion. I leave it to you, Sir, to lay this letter before the Court of Directors, if

you think it contains any matter of consequence enough to merit their attention, and that it may with propriety be communicated to them, otherwise I beg it may rest with yourself. I am, Sir, &c.

To Sir GEORGE COLEBROOKE.

Fort William, 15th January, 1773, per Prince of Wales.

Dear Sir,—Our affairs have undergone little change since my last. The King has sent a Vakeel to demand the arrears of his tribute. It yet remains to be decided whether we shall comply or not: I am determined against it. The General has given his opinion in a minute, which is in our consultations, that we ought to pay him; he has supported this position with such weak arguments, that I have let it rest for the present unanswered. The subject must be brought soon to a determination, and I believe he will stand single in his opinion, as it can hardly be a dispute who should have the preference, if the Company and the King cannot both be served.

The Mahrattas and the King have quarrelled; the former are now absolute masters of his person, and they have obtained from him the cession of the Corah country. The Vizier has turned this event, as usual, to a subject of alarm, and written for all the forces of Bengal to protect him against their apprehended invasion. It does not appear to me that the affairs of the Mahrattas are mended by this revolution, since they have lost by it the sanction of the King's authority, if that ever afforded them any real service, and considered as one party when united with him, the possession of Corah has added nothing to their strength, since it was theirs;—at least with respect to us, it was the same when the King and they together possessed it.

It is not yet resolved whether we shall oppose their

possessing themselves of the Corah province: I think we have no good cause to interfere in it. Madebrow, the Mahratta chief, is dead; his brother, a youth of nineteen, has succeeded him. It is natural to expect some effects from this change; it is more likely to breed distractions in that state than to strengthen it.

We have engaged lately in an expedition in the country of Cooch Bahar, a province lying between Rungpore and the mountains of Bootan, against the Bootanners, who had possession of it. We have had some success in it, and, to enforce the complete reduction of it, we have agreed to employ a whole battalion on the service. I have no fear of the event: although I shall ever oppose remote projects of conquest, yet I shall sedulously promote every undertaking which can complete the line of our own possessions, or add to its security.

What I have written to you upon the subject of Major Morrison will appear trifling, if his project should not meet with a favourable reception from the ministry. It appears to me a direct violation of the laws, but he is said to have a warm patron in Lord North, and the grant of the Dewannee of Bengal to the Crown may be deemed a valid plea for dispossessing the present proprietors of it. I hope the steps which I have taken to discourage and impede it will meet with your approbation, especially as I have taken the most obnoxious part of it upon my own shoulders.

I shall send you by the last ship an estimate of the loss sustained by the province of Bengal in its inhabitants, by the late famine and mortality, taken from the reports of the different collectors. If it answers no better purpose, it will at least serve to answer for the variations which have taken place, or may hereafter, in the value of the revenue. I have great reliance on the effects of the system which we have adopted, and

still hope for an annual improvement both in the population and wealth of the country. Its greatest distempers are the want of specie and the decay of trade.

I have taken much pains to investigate the conduct of Rajah Shitabroy: I can discover no defect in it: he has shown himself an able financier. This inquiry will be brought to a conclusion, I believe, this next week. There are points of dangerous consequence to the reputation of your government, since it is not possible to steer clear of the imputation of injustice on one side, or bribery on the other. I hope the character which I have studied to establish in the course of above twenty years' service will exempt me from the suspicion of either, for truths cannot possibly be obtained either to convict or acquit me.

Mahommed Reza Cawn's trial is still suspended. He has many friends; it is difficult to collect materials in support of the charge against him. I verily believe him culpable, and some of the charges I think I can clearly establish, but I want both time and assistants for such a work. I am resolved, however, to bring it on before the last despatch, and hope to make such a progress in it as may afford some lights into the probable issue of it: do not impute these delays to my inattention; my whole time and all my thoughts, I may add all my passions, are devoted to the service of the Company; and I am sure I do not labour in vain. But you cannot form a conception of the infinite calls which I have perpetually upon me, by the greatest charge which has devolved to this government, every part of which is now full, and the channels through which the business of it should flow scarcely opened for its conveyance.

I am happy to find all my hopes answered in the success of the revenue branch; on this I have bent my first attention, and it shall be my endeavour to reduce it to so simple a state, as to make it equally intelligible

to the Court of Directors with the most ordinary affairs of their government—that they may be enabled to judge with certainty of the diligence and ability by which it shall be at any time conducted. I am, &c.

To Sir GEORGE COLEBROOKE.

Fort William, 2nd February, 1773, per Duke of Grafton.

Dear Sir,—It was yesterday determined in Council to undertake the defence of the Corah province against the Mahrattas, who, as I mentioned in my last, had extorted a grant of it from the King. It is within the defensive line marked out by the Court of Directors, and I hope the resolution will meet your approbation. I, for my own part, wish it could with honour and safety have been avoided.

The reduction of the Nabob's expenses is at length completed, and the annual amount of his establishment fixed at 15,45,689.8 rupees, which is something, as you will perceive, within his income. It was difficult, and I own a painful work, to bring it thus low. I have taken every precaution that it may not be exceeded, and I think I can depend on the Begum and her Dewan that it shall not. The Nabob will suffer nothing by this reduction: he will maintain a greater state, without a competitor, than when thirty-two lacs were paid to M. R. C. for his use. The reduction of his stipend takes place from the month of January, 1772, the time when the orders of the Company were signified to him by my predecessor, although they were never understood by him to be so peremptory; and his expenses were suffered to run on at the same rate of twenty-seven lacs a-year till the month of July, when I was with the Committee at Cossimbuzar; so that the Company's orders, though suspended, have lost no time in their effect.

Major Morrison is gone, as I hear, in a Dutch ship;

the Government of Chinchura having on this occasion broken through the rule of their service, which forbids the admission of foreigners as passengers on their vessels to Europe.

You will hear of great disturbances committed by the Sinassies, or wandering Fackeers, who annually infest the province about this time of the year, in pilgrimages to Jaggernaut, going in bodies of 1,000, and sometimes even 10,000 men. An officer of reputation (Captain Thomas) lost his life in an unequal attack upon a party of these banditti, about 3,000 of them, near Rungpore, with a small party of Pergana sepoys, which has made them more talked of than they deserve. The revenue, however, has felt the effects of their ravages in the northern districts. The new establishment of sepoys which is now forming on the plan enjoined by the Court of Directors, and the distribution of them ordered for the internal protection of the provinces, will, I hope, effectually secure them hereafter from these incursions.

So little space has elapsed since my last, and the Rockingham will so soon follow, that I content myself with this miscellaneous detail of facts for the present, and to assure you that I am ever, dear Sir, &c.

To Mr. Sykes.

Fort William, 2nd March, 1773, per Rockingham.

My dear Sykes,—My last was dated the 10th December, and went by the Greenwich. Since that date the Mahrattas have quarrelled with the King, beat him, and made him give them a sunnud for the Corah province, which, it is said, they are now preparing to take possession of. The S. brigade has orders to enter it first, and oppose them. The general is returned to the army, with orders to defend that country for the King, and Oude for the Vizier, but not to pass the

bounds of either. I think the Mahrattas will not give us any trouble. They are much reduced in number, and sick of a long campaign. Their chief Mahdebrow is dead, and succeeded by Narain Row his brother, a youth of nineteen.

The settlement of Bengal is at length completed; Chittagong excepted, and the committee expected in another week.

We have entered on the inquiry of Rajah Shitabroy, who will escape with credit. Indeed, I scarce know why he was called to an account.

We have at length begun that also of Mohammed Reza Cawn. The charges against him consist of the following articles:—the monopoly of rice in the time of the famine; the embezzlement of the money of the Nizamut; a heavy balance unaccounted from him as renter of Dacca at old Jaffier's death; and a treacherous correspondence with the King and Mahrattas. This last is a new and accidental charge.

That of the rice is begun; God knows when the inquiries will all end: he has great friends. I shall proceed with strict impartiality, without friendship or enmity towards him. In one point only I am against him. I will never suffer him, if I can help it, to regain his power. The Directors are mad if they do; for the government of the provinces is now entirely at their disposal, without a competitor for the smallest share of their authority.

These retrospections and examinations are death to my views, as I have not an hour to spare from the business of the day, even if they did not interfere with it. And I fear the Court of Directors will be much displeased that their expectations are not fulfilled in other matters of the like nature. I will take them all in their turn, but no good will be got by them; they breed dissensions, and they retard the course of real business.

Justify me, my friend, if you hear me blamed for not doing more than I can do. Let them look at our proceedings, and see what has been done. We have fixed councils for four days in the week, and we have often had six. I have not missed three since I have been in the country, and every moment of my time besides is devoted to the more immediate duties of my station, Sundays excepted, and sometimes Saturdays, which I pass in the country, and generally as much involved in papers there as in town.

Let me recapitulate the principal points which have taken place :—1. The reduction of the Nabob's stipend from thirty-two lacs to sixteen, ordered in December, 1771, two months before I arrived in the country, and executed in July, 1772, without any loss from so long a suspension. 2. The reduction of the expenses from about 29 lacs to 15·2 yearly, and fixed at that sum. 3. The removal of Mahommed Reza Cawn from the Neabut and Dewanny. 4. The establishment of the Nabob's household, the appointment of the Munny Begum to the management, and Goordass to the Dewanny of the Nizamet. 5. The plan and execution of a new settlement of the lands on leases of five years. 6. The plan and establishment of the new courts of justice, consisting of two superior courts at Calcutta; the one for the causes of property appealed, the other for criminal cases: and similar dependent courts in every district. 7. The removal of the Calsa from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, the institution of a new council of revenue, and many other dependent arrangements. 8. A reformation of expenses, and an inspection into all the offices of Government, begun, but not completed for want of time. 9. Improvements in the police of Calcutta. 10. Changes in the military establishment, and regulations for the internal defence of the country. These are all I now recollect of the general regulations.

Others of inferior concern, and the multitude of auxiliary institutions required to give effect to the great ones, I cannot enumerate. I will only add that by the translation of the Calsa to Calcutta, by the exercise of the Dewanny without an intermediate agent, by the present establishment and superintendency of the Nabob's household, and by the establishment of the new courts of justice, under the control of our own government, the authority of the Company is fixed in this country without any possibility of a competition, and beyond the power of any but themselves to shake it. The Nabob is a mere name, and the seat of government most effectually and visibly transferred from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, which I do not despair of seeing the first city in Asia, if I live and am supported but a few years longer. At the same time, the suspension of the King's tribute, (which was a fatal drain to the currency of this country,) the stoppage of Mahommed Reza Cawn's, and Shitabroy's, allowances, and the reduction of the Nabob's stipend, amount alone to an annual saving of fifty-seven lacs of rupees; and whenever we shall have our official reforms, now under charge of the council of inspection, I make no doubt that a considerable retrenchment (which has already in part taken place) will be still effected.

On the other hand, the collections have suffered, though not greatly, by the effects of the famine, to which we have had additional cause this year in the northern districts by the irruption of the Senassies. But these have been so speedily and vigorously checked, that they have been obliged to quit the country without doing much mischief. I am not without my fears of suffering by want of personal interest at home, of being sacrificed in a party accommodation, or condemned from the false suggestions of private letter writers. I have no time to write. If I had, I

can neither submit to the villainy of attacking characters in the dark, nor defending my own from assaults which I cannot see. Every individual in this settlement has the advantage of me in this respect, if he chooses to avail himself of it. When I look back on what I have done, I sometimes exult in the thought of having merited the applause of my employers I oftener dread censure from misrepresentation, from misconstructions, from the disappointment of the expectations of the Court of Directors on points of trivial consequence, or impracticable in the execution, and more from their inability to read and inform themselves properly of what has been done.

[In confidence let me add, that if I was to lose my government to-day, I should leave it a poorer man than when I assumed it.]

Some addition I made to my fortune at Madras, if I recover all I left behind me there. There I had some leisure to attend to my own affairs, and you will stare when I tell you that my books were balanced to the month preceding my departure, and my cash account closed to the very day of it. Adieu, my dear friend.

To Sir George Colebrooke.

Fort William, 3rd March, 1773.

Dear Sir,—Nothing material has happened since the departure of the Duke of Grafton. I hope the resolution lately formed for the defence of Cora will be approved. It was formed (as you will see) on a paragraph of a general letter written on an occasion so exactly parallel to that before us, that we could not act otherwise. I do not apprehend that it will draw us into difficulties, and I am sure everything has been done, that could be done, to prevent its loading us with an expense.

Being much more solicitous about what remains un-

done, than for the effect of measures already taken, I take the freedom to send you enclosed a minute which is just prepared to be laid before the Board containing a new scheme of regulations for levying the public customs. It was drawn up under my directions by Mr. Lushington, a young man of abilities, and versed in the subject, having been some time a comptroller of one branch of the Customs, the Buxbunder. The plan is simple, and if it passes, (for it has not yet been communicated to any of the members of council,) I think it will bid fair to restore the trade of the province—the most rational way of increasing the amount of the Customs that any I know of.

It has already been advertised that the dustucks are to cease after the 12th of April next.

I hope, before the close of the Hector's packet, to set on foot a plan for the provision of the investment, conformable to the principles laid down by the Court of Directors, and to free the weavers (if possible) from that state of vassalage to which they are now subjected. and which, I am sorry to say, falls with heavier oppression on the Company's weavers than any other. The design is liable to difficulty, and the investments will become dearer, apparently very much dearer, for it. I say apparently, because I am assured that the cloths are so greatly under-rated, that a great part of the advances are lost in irrecoverable balances, so that a piece of cloth which is invoiced at six rupees, in effect costs eight, the difference remaining on account, but never to be realized. Something must be done, and heartily supported, for the trade of this country is beyond decay; it is utterly gone. I much fear that the superior advantages possessed by the collectors, excluding all competition, are among the first causes of it.

The inquiry into the conduct of Rajah Shitabroy is

not yet finished. By the assistance of Mr. Vansittart, who has lately taken his seat at the Board, I hope to conclude it soon, as he is intimately acquainted with the subjects with which Shitabroy is charged.

The examination into the charges alleged against M. R. Cawn has at length taken place. Some days have been consumed in taking depositions concerning the purchase and sale of rice during the famine, by his order. Much time must elapse before we can close this part of his inquiry. The other articles relate merely to accounts. These trials are a grievous impediment to public business, of which I have already felt the effects, and do now most sensibly in the close of this packet, which was fixed for the first of the month, and the fourth is now almost past. I fear, too, our general letter will appear but imperfect from the precipitate manner in which we have been obliged to form it.

The committee appointed to make the circuit of Bengal have finished their tour, and are daily expected. The Mahrattas have not yet made any decisive advances. They are weak, and seem irresolute. The general was at Patna the 25th of last month, and is by this time with the army. I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

P. S.—Captain Hamilton has been so obliging as to take charge of two deer, a male and female, of a species which is called neel-gow, and is, I believe, unknown in Europe, which he will deliver to you in my name. I request your acceptance of them. They are a hardy animal, and will, I dare say, find themselves as happy in the lawns of Gatton, as they were in their native mountains of Napaul.

To Sir George Colebrooke.

Fort William, 7th March, 1773.

Dear Sir,—I have often lamented that the connexion between us hath hitherto subsisted on no firmer ground

than an intercourse of official communication. I feel a diffidence in expressing my thoughts upon many subjects of a confidential nature, because I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with your sentiments towards me, to judge how far these may entitle me to your support in cases which reach beyond the ordinary line of the Company's service. A sense of the obligations which I owe you, and which I can never repay, is an insurmountable bar to my seeking to add to them by soliciting personal favours, and even restrains me from proposing measures of public advantage, by which my own interest may be virtually promoted, or my ambition gratified. These considerations alone have prevented my addressing you much earlier upon a subject in which I conceive the interests of the Company to be very essentially concerned, and which I have now determined to submit to your consideration, although the tendency of it may expose me to the suspicion of seeking my own advantage under colour of the public service. I hope that the constant tenor of my conduct in the course of a very long service will exempt me from such imputations; but whatever my motives may be supposed, your judgment in the decision can have no improper bias. You may acquire an increase of reputation by the success of such measures as you shall pursue, but I do not see how it is possible for you to be a gainer by them, if they are such as may bring a reproach upon your administration.

The want of clear and distinct lines to mark the different parts of which the Government of Bengal is composed is the greatest of the many defects which clog this establishment.

By the constitution of the Company, the Council at large have the supreme authority in all matters which either come in the course of office before their notice, or of which they choose to take cognizance; but as their

power exists only while they sit in a body, so much of it is delegated to the governor, their president, as is supposed to be necessary for giving a continual currency to business, or for executing such of their functions as do not appertain to any distinct office of government. It is not easy to determine what points fall under this description. In effect, the governor is no more than any other individual of the Council, if the others choose to partake of his authority, although the responsibility of affairs seems to rest with him only. An opinion that he possesses something more, and a superior share of diligence or ability, may give him an influence in the administration which he wants constitutionally; but in the latter he may be exceeded by others, and the former must vanish the instant it is put to the test; and whenever these cases happen, the government, for want of a power to preside and rule it, must fall into anarchy.

These indeed are the inevitable consequences of the ancient form of government, which was instituted for the provision of the investment, the sale of the Company's exported cargoes, and the despatch of their ships, being applied to the dominion of an extensive kingdom, the collection of a vast revenue, the command of armies, and the direction of a great political system, besides the additional charge devolved to their commercial department by its relation to the general trade of the country, and its effect on the public revenue.

A system of affairs so new, requires a new system of government to conduct it. The variety and importance of the objects which depend upon it, require consistency, steadiness, and despatch, qualities incompatible with a body of men.

To remedy these defects in our constitution, the select committee has been appointed with powers to conduct the detail, or dependent operations of the

political and military lines, without an immediate communication with the Council. But as the movements of the army, and every determination immediately respecting peace or war, depend solely on the Council at large, the powers of the select committee are confined to so narrow a compass, that in effect they are next to nothing, and only serve to embarrass and multiply business. If you will give yourself the trouble to turn over the proceedings of this committee since I have been a member of it, you will find that not one event or measure of consequence is recorded in them, which was not communicated to the board for their decision upon it. I do not know whether you are acquainted with it, but it was originally owing to the Council not being consulted on the arrangements which brought on the resignation of Meer Jaffier, and the subsequent elevation of Meer Cossim, that the opposition first took rise against Mr. Vansittart; and it soon found materials to work with, as the change of Government introduced by Mr. Vansittart and his committee, though so far successful, required daily and perpetual measures to support it, which depended entirely on the will of the Board, who showed their aversion to it by such effectual means, and in a manner so notorious, that it at last ended in another revolution.

Little more need be said to show the necessity of distinguishing the powers of the Council, the select committee, and the governor, and of substituting to the nominal authority of the latter, such a degree of actual control as may enable him to support with credit the character of the ostensible head of Government, to give vigour to its decrees, and preserve them from inconsistencies.

For this purpose I have formed the three following propositions, which, without further preface, I refer to your consideration, only requesting that if you do not

approve of them, you will not divulge them, for obvious reasons.

1. The select committee shall have the power of making peace or war, and of determining all measures respecting both, independent of the Council at large. But they shall enter into no treaty of alliance, whether offensive or defensive for a longer duration than two years, without a special authority from the Honourable the Court of Directors. Every such treaty shall be communicated to the Council at large, as soon as it conveniently may be, that their opinion upon it may be transmitted with it to the Court of Directors.

2. It shall nevertheless be allowable for the president to bring any matter before the Council at large, although included within the above limitations, and the decision of the Council thereon shall be valid and binding on the select committee. But no other member of the committee shall be allowed the same privilege.

3. The president shall have the privilege of acting by his own separate authority on such urgent and extraordinary cases as shall in his judgment require it, notwithstanding any decision of the Council or the select committee passed thereon. On every such occasion the president shall record his resolution to act in the manner above specified in virtue of the power thus vested in him, and shall expressly declare that he charges himself with the whole responsibility.

These, Sir, are the outlines of the plan of government which I presume to recommend. Many inferior and subsidiary regulations might be added, but these I would rather leave to your better judgment. One remark permit me to make, that a total change has been lately effected in the government of this province, in the mode of administering justice, and in the collection of the revenue.

Every intermediate power is removed, and the sovereignty of this country wholly and absolutely vested in the Company. If these innovations are approved, I shall be entitled, as the instrument by which they were produced, to all the support which the Court of Directors can give me. No man can have an equal interest in the success of any new system with the author of it. Leave it at large to a variable body of men, or to the quick succession of single managers, it will soon lose its original principles, and fall into decay. I am, with the sincerest esteem and regard, dear Sir, &c.

To John Purling, Esq.

per Hector, 31st March, 1773.

Dear Sir,—The close attention I pay to the affairs of this government, disqualifies me for the business of a private correspondence. My inclination is good, but the want of leisure on these occasions is an insuperable obstacle; it is unnecessary, however, to expatiate on it, as I cannot but flatter myself, you have already placed my long silence to its proper cause. Indeed I have considered myself, since my accession to this government, as corresponding with every member of the direction in every general letter addressed to them, as I have not a thought on the affairs of the Company worth communicating which is not inserted within.

2. My last address to you was on the 11th of November, 1772, in which I acknowledged the receipt of your favour of the 25th March, and referred you to the letters from our public departments for such information as you would wish to arrive at relative to our transactions here; pointing out, and recommending, such facts for your serious consideration, as I thought best deserved it. You will find we have not been idle, and I hope will be able to discover that our aims have been confined to such points as tend

most essentially to the interest and honour of the Company, and particularly to the improvement of the revenue.

3. Next to the revenue, the object of my consideration has been the security of these provinces from the calamities of war, and notwithstanding the most pressing importunity of the Vizier, positive orders have been given to General Barker, who is now with the army, to act on the defensive only. How far the necessity of untoward circumstances may disappoint my hopes on that score, I dare not pretend to determine, for the affairs of the Empire in that quarter are in a state of the utmost confusion. The Mahrattas have quarrelled with the King, and have extorted from him the grant of his dominions. Of the provinces of Cora and Allahabad they have declared their intention of taking possession, and we have already taken possession; they are so weak, and we have so powerful a force at hand to oppose them, that I fear no danger in the issue of the campaign.

4. We have lately been much troubled here with herds of desperate adventurers called Senassies, who have over-run the province in great numbers, and committed great depredations. The particulars of these disturbances, and of our endeavours to repel them, you will find in our general letters and consultations, which will acquit the government of any degree of blame from such a calamity. At this time we have five battalions of sepoys in pursuit of them, and I have still hopes of exacting ample vengeance for the mischief they have done us, as they have no advantage over us, but in the speed with which they fly from us. A minute relation of these adventurers cannot amuse you, nor indeed are they of great moment; for which reason give me leave to drop this subject and lead you to one in which you cannot but be more interested, as it fur-

nishes me with an occasion of saying some things which are as much to the reputation of your nephew as they are likely to prove advantageous to the Company.

5. The reduction of the Cooch Bahar province has proved a more arduous undertaking than we at first imagined. The inhabitants of Boutan, who were in possession of it, are a resolute and daring people. They made a desperate defence of the fort of Bahar, which Captain Jones stormed, and took, with the loss of nearly one fourth of his detachment killed and wounded; himself and another officer being of the latter number; and since that time they attacked a small detachment under the command of Lieutenant Dickson, in the middle of the night, with desperate resolution, many of them meeting death at the muzzle of the sepoys' pieces: but not it seems, with great judgment, for although their number exceeded 3000, and Lieutenant Dickson's detachment only consisted of 226 rank and file, they were beat off with great loss, as soon as daylight appeared. On this occasion your nephew, who was there, had his full share of the danger and honour of the field. This knowledge I received in a letter from Lieutenant Dickson, who had bestowed on Mr. Purling the highest commendations, and I believe truly deserved. I have taken care that Lieutenant Dickson's letters on this subject may be known to the Court of Directors, and in confidence I tell you my principal view (though there are other obvious reasons for it) was the desire I had of making generally known a conduct and behaviour so much to the credit of my young friend Purling.

6. If the reduction of Cooch Bahar is likely to be effected with more difficulty than was imagined, I must at the same time remark, that it proves to be a far more valuable acquisition than we expected, being in fertility and abundance equal to any district of the

same dimensions in Bengal. As we have capable officers there, and they will shortly be reinforced by another battalion, I make no doubt but they will be able to take entire possession of the Cooch Bahar country, and to secure it to the Company, by stationing small garrisons at proper posts, during the rains. Indeed there is every reason to suppose the Boutans would be glad to come into our terms, in order to secure a communication for their merchandise into Bengal by the passes through the Cooch Bahar province, which are the only inlets from the country. I think also that there is not a doubt, but that the revenue produced by this acquisition to the country will do much more than support the expense of keeping a small military force there, to secure the possession of it.

Having communicated everything you can think material, let me present you my best wishes for your welfare, and assure you of my being, with a sincere esteem, dear Sir, &c.

To Sir George Colebrooke.

per Hector, 31st March, 1773.

Dear Sir,—In my last I mentioned that we had every reason to suppose the Senassie Fakiers had entirely evacuated the Company's possessions. Such were the advices I then received, and their usual progress made this highly probable; but it seems they were either disappointed in crossing the Burramputrah river, or they changed their intention, and returned in several bands of about 2000 or 3000 each; appearing unexpectedly in different parts of the Rungpoor and Dinagepoor provinces. For in spite of the strictest orders issued and the severest penalties threatened to the inhabitants, in case they fail in giving intelligence of the approach of the Senassies, they are so infatuated

by superstition, as to be backward in giving the information, so that the banditti are sometimes advanced into the very heart of our provinces, before we know anything of their motions; as if they dropt from heaven to punish the inhabitants for their folly. One of these parties falling in with a small detachment commanded by Captain Edwards, an [illegible] ensued, wherein our sepoys gave way, and Captain Edwards lost his life in endeavouring to cross a nullah. This detachment was formed of the very worst of our Purgunnah sepoys, who seem to have behaved very ill. This success elated the Senassies, and I heard of their depredations from every quarter in those districts. Captain Stuart, with the 19th battalion of sepoys, who was before employed against them, was vigilant in the pursuit, wherever he could hear of them, but to no purpose; they were gone before he could reach the places to which he was directed. I ordered another battalion from Burrampore to march immediately, to co-operate with Captain Stuart, but to act separately; in order to have the better chance of falling in with them. At the same time I ordered another battalion to march from the Dinapoor station, through Tyroot, and by the northern frontier of the Purneah province, following the track which the Senassies usually took, in order to intercept them, in case they marched that way. This battalion, after acting against the Senassies, if occasion offered, was directed to pursue their march to Cooch Bahar, where they are to join Captain Jones, and assist in the reduction of that country.

Several parties of the Senassies having entered into the Purneah province, burning and destroying many villages there, the collector applied to Captain Brooke, who was just arrived at Panity, near Rajahmahl with his new-raised battalion of light infantry. That

officer immediately crossed the river, and entered upon measures against the Senassies; and had very near fallen in with a party of them, just as they were crossing the Cosa river, to escape out of that province, he arrived on the opposite bank before their rear had entirely crossed, but too late to do any execution among them.

It is apparent now that the Senassies are glad to escape as fast as they can out of the Company's possessions; but I am still in hopes that some of the many detachments now acting against them may fall in with some of their parties, and punish them exemplarily for their audacity.

It is impossible, but that, on account of the various depredations which the Senassies have committed, the revenue must fall short in some of the Company's districts; as well from real as from pretended losses. The Board of Revenue, aware of this last consideration, have come to the resolution of admitting no pleas for a reduction of revenue, but such as are attended with circumstances of conviction, and by this means they hope to prevent, as much as in their power, all impositions on the Government, and to render the loss to the Company as inconsiderable as possible.* Effectual means will be used, by stationing some small detachments at proper posts on our frontier, to prevent any future incursions from the Senassie Fakiers, or any other roving banditti; a measure, which only the extraordinary audacity of their last incursions hath manifested to be necessary. This will be effected without employing many troops; and I hope, that in no future time the revenues shall again suffer from this cause.

* You will not find this resolution in our Records. I venture to mention it as my own, and that of the other members in private communication with each other.

To JOSIAS DUPRE, Esq.

Fort William, 9th March, 1773, per Hector.

Dear Sir,—Nothing could be more welcome to me than your letters of the 30th of January and 1st of February. I had received intelligence two days before of your departure, and my conscience had begun to whisper to me that my omissions had drawn upon me the disappointment of not hearing from you then as a just retaliation. I am fortunate that you received my packet, on which I impatiently wait for your opinion. It may decide my fortune possibly before you can arrive in England.

I had before heard of the vexatious contests in which you had been engaged some time before your departure. You have concluded them most triumphantly, and it is with pleasure I can inform you that every person whom I have heard speak of these transactions, and every letter that has related them, do justice to your conduct, and severely condemn that of your opponents. I am sorry to have been so much deceived in Mackay. It is impossible to devise an extenuation of his behaviour. Sir Robert's as yet appears only ridiculous, for I know of no particulars of it besides his unfortunate plea of parliamentary duty, although I cannot help feeling my share of the injury offered you by the daily opposition which I am told he raised against you at the Board, for you may remember, and I am now sorry for it, how warmly I was his advocate with you when Wood stood between him and the succession, which I should never have been but from the very high opinion in which I held his military talents, and the solemn assurances which he gave me that he would ever exert himself in the hearty support of your government. I wish to hear from Macpherson. I have ever believed him to be the man you report him. I have very little personal interest in England,

but the little I have I will heartily employ in seconding his pretensions, and shall rejoice to see him here. This service wants men of abilities, who have no pretensions to desert it, for every man capable of business runs away to the collectorships, or other lucrative stations where I fear their talents are perniciously applied more to the improvement of their own fortunes than the Company's benefit. At the presidency, where the best assistance is required, the worst only can be had; the Company being as rigid about visible salaries and emoluments here as at Fort St. George, and as indifferent about perquisites, though the former are but pittances and the latter amount to lacs. I have already written to Sir George Colebrooke, and as much as I could write in favour of Macpherson. I shall obey your instructions with respect to Captain Weller's Bond. Aldersey merits so much from me, that I can want no additional inducement to cherish his friendship; he has always shown himself most cordially my friend, supported me like a man, and is much more the man of business than many who pass for more brilliant understandings, which I have often had the disappointment to find mere surfaces.

I am happy in the assurances which you give me of your friendship, and thankful for the promise of your support. My own heart tells me that I have a just claim to the former, and I shall endeavour by every means to maintain my claim to it until I am so fortunate as to meet you in England. I know not whether my pride is not as much interested as my fortune in the opinion which you may entertain of my conduct. I shall contrive from time to time to submit it to you, and shall be obliged to you for your advice and unreserved sentiments upon it.

I have already entered more than one caveat against the too rigid censures of our honourable masters, by

declaring upon record that it was necessary we should err; the importance of despatch when we are crowded with more business than we can push through, making it more eligible to resolve without debate, than to debate without resolving, or, which is much the same, to give so much time on the prudent accomplishment of one measure, as to leave many others suspended. You may therefore condemn me as freely as you please; allowing me this reserve, for it is ten to one that I join with you in the sentence.

The greatest part of the preceding pages were written to go by the Rockingham, but I was hindered from concluding it in time, and kept it for the Hector's packet, which will be the last of the season. I have endeavoured to imitate the punctuality of the Madras despatches, and have so far succeeded as to be generally within two or three days of the day appointed, which, considering all things, is a great point effected.

Since the date of this letter our Board has been rejoined by the members who were absent on a circuit of the province, and my friend, George Vansittart, has been admitted into Council. This has brought an addition of very capable hands, and I am happy to add that, after various contests, disputes, protests, and an almost open rupture, a perfect harmony and confidence have at length taken place amongst us. With our divisions you are already acquainted. They were never conducted with asperity or ill temper, and by proper explanations every source of dissent is, I think, effectually removed. I am assured of a most cordial support from my associates, and can venture to delegate a share of the labours which I have hitherto undertaken alone to others, without the same hazard of sacrificing my own authority. There is, however, one exception, but of no consequence. I hope I shall not

experience another in the General, who is lately returned to the army, and by an act of disobedience on a subject almost too frivolous to be mentioned, has drawn on him a public expression of the Board's displeasure. Captain Harper, an officer who had resided some time at the Vizier's court, was ordered to return to Bengal with the battalion which he commanded. The Vizier insisted rather too warmly on his continuance, and the General urged it at the Board, but without effect. Captain Harper was on his return when the General set out for the army, and he has taken him back with him. The Board have issued a public order for his instant return, and forbidden every officer of whatever rank to detain him, but avoided either a correspondence with the General on the occasion, or to commit more of the affair to record than was necessary, from professed motives of moderation, as the affairs in which he is now engaged require a good and confidential understanding between him and the Board. It rests with him to let this little spring run to a torrent, or stop its course at once by a silent acquiescence. To prevent disagreements from matters of importance, his instructions were drawn out with the greatest precision, and, I think, with great perspicuity.

The King having ceded Corah to the Mahrattas, we as his allies, and the original proprietors, resolved to defend it; and the Vizier being alarmed for the safety of his dominions, we resolved also on the defence of them. In both these measures we are guarded by express orders of the Company. On the north of the Vizier lies a tract of country bounded by the Ganges and the mountains of Tartary, governed by Hafiz Rahmut Cawn, a Rohilla chief, who was defeated and plundered by the Mahrattas the last year.

We empowered the Vizier to extend his operations

on that side of the river to this country (but not to pass the river), whether Hafiz Rahmut should be our ally, or join the Mahrattas against us.

We limited his operations in Corah to the line of that province. He is to take present possession of it for the Company, and to appropriate a lac of rupees monthly from its collections to the charge of the brigade. He is to require assignments for the stipulated monthly payment of 115,000 rupees from the Vizier, or to leave him.

The Mahrattas are weak, and, I believe, will undertake nothing this season. If they do not, our army will probably return to their own quarters in the rains.

Our own provinces have worn something of a warlike appearance this year, having been infested by bands of Senassies, who have defeated two small parties of Purgunnah sepoys (a rascally corps), and cut off the two officers who commanded them. One was Captain Thomas, whom you knew. Four battalions of the brigade sepoys are now in pursuit of them, but they will not stand an engagement, and have neither camp equipage, nor even clothes, to retard their flight. Yet I hope we shall yet make an example of some of them, as they are shut in by the rivers, which they cannot pass when closely pursued.

The history of this people is curious. They inhabit, or rather possess, the country lying south of the hills of Tibbet from Caubul to China. They go mostly naked. They have neither towns, houses, nor families, but rove continually from place to place, recruiting their numbers with the healthiest children they can steal in the countries through which they pass. Thus they are the stoutest and most active men in India. Many are merchants. They are all pilgrims, and held by all castes of Gentoos in great veneration. This in-

fatuation prevents our obtaining any intelligence of their motions, or aid from the country against them, notwithstanding very rigid orders which have been published for these purposes, insomuch that they often appear in the heart of the province as if they dropped from heaven. They are hardy, bold, and enthusiastic to a degree surpassing credit. Such are the Senassies, the gipsies of Hindostan.

We have dissolved all the Purgunnah sepoys, and fixed stations of the brigade sepoys on our frontiers, which are to be employed only in the defence of the provinces, and to be relieved every three months. This, I hope, will secure the peace of the country against future irruptions, and as they are no longer to be employed in the collections, the people will be freed from the oppressions of our own plunderers.

A plan is on foot for the establishment of a bank in Calcutta for the purpose of bringing the collections by bills to the presidency, and affording individuals the same means of making remittances to the awrungs, or markets of the country, for trade. The scheme is formed, and waits only for fit persons to execute it. I shall endeavour to get it copied for this enclosure.

A plan has been formed and completed for collecting the public customs. It is simple, calculated for the freedom of trade, and liable to no abuses. All the petty Chokeys of the country are withdrawn, and the distinction of the dustuck, which (among other objections) pointed out to the rogues in office what boats they were to pass unmolested, and what they might plunder with impunity, is abolished. The duty is fixed to 2½ per cent.; the prices of every article fixed and made public, and the duty paid; the goods pass unmolested to the extremities of the province.

I have hopes of being able to effect another reformation, which will also contribute much to the freedom of

trade, by *recalling all the gomastahs, and proiiding the investment by Dudney contracts,* or ready money purchases; to declare the weavers free to work for whom they will, and to support them in that freedom. You will guess why I have marked the sentence at the top of this page. Different circumstances require different, and often opposite measures. The Company, and their collectors and chiefs of factories are the only merchants of the country; they force advances of money on the weavers, and compel them to give cloths in return at an arbitrary valuation, which is often no more than the cost of the materials, so that the poor weaver only lives by running in debt to his employers, and thus becomes their slave for life. The collectors trade with the money which they get in the districts, which affects the circulation as well as commerce of the country. By the mode proposed the investment will be dearer, but the trade of the country will be restored, and indeed this country has wonderful resources for it. The remittances of the revenue will flow back in circulation, and in their customs or collections the Company will obtain an ample compensation for the difference which it will make in the price of their cloths. If they do not, they can better afford to pay dear for them than the Dutch or French can.

I have some thoughts of making another excursion for the purpose of obtaining a meeting with the Vizier, who has also expressed his wish more than once for an interview. Hitherto he has been entirely managed by the military, who have contrived to keep him so weak that his alliance is of no manner of use to us, but obliges us on every alarm to send our army to prevent his being overpowered by his enemies, which has been usually done at the Company's expense, little being required for reimbursement, and that little paid after long delays. I wish to establish a new and more

rational alliance between him and the Company, and more creditable to both, and to establish his dependance on the government instead of the military influence which has hitherto ruled him. In this design I am assured of the most hearty support of the Council.

It is scarcely worth mentioning that we have been lately engaged in a kind of Polligar war with the inhabitants of Boutan, for the recovery of Cooch Bahar, which lies between their mountains and Rungpore, and has been for some years in their possession. We have fought and defeated them in two desperate engagements, and we have possession of the country, but they appear resolutely bent on retrieving their misfortunes, and will give us much trouble, being a sturdy, intrepid race of people. In a late engagement with a detachment of 226 sepoys, which lasted from two in the morning till seven, and in which they were the assailants, 200 of them were killed on the spot. We have a battalion on this side commanded by a very good officer; it will be reinforced by another. The country is equal in fertility and cultivation to any in Bengal, and I have no doubt of the revenue repaying our charges at least. I hope more from the possession of it, besides that it will complete our boundary, and confine these hardy neighbours to their own hills.

I fear every thing that looks stockjobbish, for which reason I send you the copy of a minute which was delivered into our Board since the close of our despatches (mentioned the last of the season) proposing a reduction of the Company's interest from eight to five per cent., with the opinion and resolution of the Board upon it, in two separate papers. I suspect the former may find its way to the newspapers. I know not whether you will think the objections to it well supported. I hope we shall be able to reduce the debt, but I cannot

approve of touching the interest, and teaching people to take an advantage of our necessities by availing ourselves of theirs. I need not mention that I mean these papers for your own perusal only. The first of them may afford you a little insight into the character of its author.

If you are an idle man, you may read this long letter without much regret for the expense of time which it will cost you. If a man of business, excuse it, and run it over at your leisure. It will bear to be divided, each paragraph being I believe on a different subject. Is not this a piece of a blunder, since you must have read the foregoing sheets before you come to this?

I remember hearing you declare you would lead a country life, and have no more concerns in public business, I hope, and am not altogether selfish in hoping it, that you will not adhere to this resolution.

But whatever line you may make your choice, may you be happy, loved, honoured and esteemed as much as I think you deserve. Can my services here be of use to you? I wish you would employ them. I beg to be remembered with my compliments and best wishes to Mrs. Dupré.—I am, dear Sir, your sincerely affectionate and faithful servant.

To Sir George Colebrooke.

Fort William, 3rd April, 1773.

Dear Sir,—The plan of customs which I sent you with my last despatches has been since completed, and a Board of Customs formed to superintend it. It is simple: the expense reduced, all the inferior chokeys withdrawn, and the goods, after one payment, free to go wherever the owners please without molestation. The dustuck will be abolished the 12th of this month, which will put an end to that distinction, which seems to have been the chief cause of oppression to the un-

protected traders. I venture to pronounce it a good regulation, and the first effectual step to that free trade which I know you have much at heart.

I am busy in collecting materials for another innovation from which I promise myself equal success in promoting the same. It is to withdraw all our gomastahs, and to provide the investment either by Dadney, or ready money purchases, to declare the weavers free to take advances from whom they please, and to support them in this privilege. Your investment will be dearer, and perhaps inferior in quality the first year, but it will greatly multiply the number of manufacturers and increase the trade of Bengal. We want such an aid to recruit our revenue. Bengal is capable of supplying the markets, both of Europe and Asia, with its manufactures, if these are duly encouraged; and as it wants none of the superfluities of life, and amply abounds in all the necessaries of it, it may receive a yearly flow of specie from this source to supply the drains which have been of late years too lavishly made of its treasure, without the least provision made or thought of for replacing it. As to the price of your cloths, they are now falsely rated, many of the charges being unnoticed in the valuation of the loss in every advance, by bad and irrecoverable debts, which are in fact a part of the cost, and the means by which the poor weaver escapes being starved, remaining as a balance under a fallacious head in the general books. Besides, if we do pay dearer for our goods, the Dutch and French must do so too, who cannot so well afford it.

The unequal and impeded circulation of specie which has distressed these provinces for some years past, and which is an inevitable consequence of the remittances of treasure from the districts to the capital, and the want of trade to return it, has rendered it necessary to

form a general bank for the purpose of establishing the practice of remittances by bill. Other uses also it is hoped will attend the institution. I say no more of it, as I shall enclose the scheme itself, which has lain before the Board some time, and which will be accomplished nearly, if not entirely, in the form in which you will receive it. The rates of hoondian or commission are fixed. We have received from most of the collectors the current rates of exchange in the districts, and wait but the rest to fix the rates for our bank, when it will be opened. The discount on old siccas will be totally abolished, and to put a stop to the artifices by which the shroffs draw a profit from the rupees coined in the different mints of the two provinces, by affixing a batta on them, notwithstanding a similitude of the impression, I believe we shall find it expedient to have but one mint, and that of course in Calcutta.

I mentioned in some of my former letters that I proposed to form an estimate of the loss which the country had sustained in its inhabitants by the famine. The accounts which I have received are formed on such different plans that I cannot reduce them to one form, or establish the proportional loss with accuracy, but I send you an abstract of the materials which have been sent me, and from them you may judge of the effects of that dreadful calamity. I do not believe they are over-rated at one half. The increase in Rungpore, as explained to me by Mr. Purling the collector, was owing to the annual overflowing of the river Toosta about this time of the year, which preserved that district from the effects of the general drought, and by the plenty which prevailed, occasioned a resort of people from other districts, multitudes of whom perished, but others still remained and became inhabitants of that quarter. The violence with which the

collections were kept up, notwithstanding this desolation, and particularly in the assessment which you will find under the explanation of the term na-jay in our first letter from the Board of Revenue, a tax (in a word) upon the survivors to make up the deficiencies of the dead, prevented the instant effect which it might have been expected to produce on the collections, though its influence has operated to the prejudice of the present settlement. This is now completed, and it must be the work of the ensuing four years of the general lease to repair the damages of the country.

Our political affairs continue nearly in the same state. The General is with the Vizier in the Rohilla country. The Mahrattas appear more inclined to retreat than to fight.

The Vizier has fixed his ambition on the Rohilla country which adjoins to his, and is included by the Ganges and the mountains of Tartary, and has made tempting offers for our assistance in conquering it for him. It would be a complete addition to his dominions, and the hostile part which the Rohillas have taken against him would justify the measure. It is but newly suggested, and I can say no more upon the expediency or probability of its taking place.

I must beg your excuse for the hurry and unconnection of this letter. I have scarcely time to write at all. I am, with unfeigned regard and esteem, dear Sir, &c.

P.S. I beg the favour of you to show the plan for a bank to Mr. Sulivan, as I have not time to make another copy.

CHAPTER IX.

View of the difficulties to be surmounted in working out his reforms—Correspondence with different functionaries.

It is not to be supposed that such results as are described in the preceding letters could be brought about either in a moment, or without encountering a good deal of opposition. Mr. Hastings's plans for the management of the revenue were objected to by all the supervisors, and by such members of the Supreme Council as they were able to influence. His proposed reduction of a corps of cavalry, as well as his desire to establish an improved medium of communication with the Court of Oude, excited the indignation of the Commander in Chief, and at the outset, at least, of the Nabob himself. Of such opposition, however, Mr. Hastings made very light; he took it with all possible good humour: he reasoned points wherever he found men open to reason, and finally prevailed, not merely to carry his own measures, but, in almost every instance, to carry them with the perfect approbation of his colleagues. I subjoin one or two letters, rather as specimens of his style in conducting controversies of the sort, than because they

throw any great additional light on the history of this portion of his administration.

Mr. Barwell, to whom he writes with so much good taste and good feeling, was then opposed to him in the Council, though he afterwards became, under circumstances much more trying, his steady supporter. Mr. Marriott was a collector, who, like many more, dreaded the proposed change because it would interfere with his personal interests; and Mr. Grueber one of the commissioners who had it in charge to prepare the provinces for the new settlement. It is worthy of remark, that all these letters were written while Mr. Hastings was himself engaged in the prosecution of the survey; for he did not hesitate to take his share in this subordinate labour, or to give to others less skilled in fiscal details the benefit of his experience.

To Mr. Marriott.

Cossimbazar, July 22, 1772.

Dear Sir,—You have been equally misinformed both with respect to the supposed accusations against you, and the separation of Selburris from Dinagepoor. It is possible and probable that both Selburris, and Berbazoo, and Attya (I think the last forms a part of your collectorship) may be separated from Dinagepoor, not upon account of any misconduct in the collector, (this would be a strange kind of retribution,) but because they have been improperly annexed to your district, and are too remote to be included in your collection. It will rest with the committee to make such a disposition of the districts as they, upon

the spot, shall think most expedient for the country and for the easy collection of the revenues. But you may be assured that nothing is nor can yet be determined concerning them.

I will not conceal from you that I have heard it frequently alleged as a general charge against the collectors that they were the sole traders in their respective provinces, and particularly in the article of grain. But I have never heard your name mentioned upon such a subject, nor in any way that could reflect a censure upon it.

I am pleased to remark in the sentiments which you express on this occasion, the effects of that spirit which is the attendant of conscious integrity; but the precautions which you have taken to obviate any reports to your prejudice were unnecessary with me. You may be assured that I shall never give credit to any complaints against you, unless supported by the strongest proofs, and then I shall certainly inform you of them, if I think them of such a nature as to merit attention.

To Mr. N. GRUEBER.

Cossimbazar, 21st July, 1772.

You have my permission to take with you what number of sepoys you think requisite for your defence on the journey. When you return them I recommend to you to give strict injunctions to the officer who commands them to prevent their committing any disturbance in the way, as he shall be made answerable for any complaints that shall be proved against the rest.

I have given letters to many complainants whose causes I desire you will take immediate cognizance of, and dismiss them, giving each a copy of your decree; a rule which ought to be invariably practised with all persons who appear either as complainants or respondents before you.

I earnestly recommend to you to set apart a fixed portion of your time daily, or as often as your other duties will permit, to hear and decide all complaints that shall be brought before you. It will facilitate your business much if you keep a brief register of all causes that shall be brought before you, entering the names of the complainant and the respondent, with the general charge, and your decision; those of each pergunnah being registered apart. By this means you will at any time see by a glance on your register whether the same persons have ever been brought before you, or the same causes before decided.

A few instances of strict justice afforded to the persons injured, and a few severe examples made of great offenders, will save you much future trouble by lessening the number of complainants as there will be fewer causes of complaint.

Your own servants, unless attended to with a most watchful eye, will be the greatest oppressors of the country, each in proportion to the confidence that you repose in him. You cannot avoid committing much to their charge, but one of the most likely means of restraining their licentiousness will be to pay a particular attention to the complaints against them, and to make it known that you will protect the complainants from their resentment.

I earnestly recommend these points to your constant attention, as no less necessary to your own ease and reputation than to the credit of our government and the interest of the Company. Wishing you health and success, I remain, &c. &c. &c.

To R. C. Barwell, Esq.

Cossimbazar, 22nd July, 1772.

Dear Sir,—Our argument on the Vackaulut is likely to remain long undecided. I have told you my objections. They appear to me incontrovertible. But you

are of a different opinion, and it is possible that I may have expressed myself differently upon it at the time which you allude to, which is very distant; but I profess to you that I cannot trace back this subject in my memory to any point of time when I should have approved of the fixed residence of a member of Council at the Court of Shuja Dowla. I always thought the man and his connexion of too little importance, and the office of too little, besides the Company's express orders which forbid it. You join vackeel and ambassador as terms synonymous. They are not altogether so, and perhaps I may approve of the one and dislike the other. In effect, I begin to wish for the latter. You will be informed by the papers which were sent two days past to the Board, that the General and his coadjutor have brought our affairs into that critical state in which, if ever, it becomes necessary for the Board to interfere, by the representation of some person who may be furnished with their sentiments and clear instructions upon the political line to be observed in all their negociations with the Vizier and his friends and opponents. He has told us that the Mahrattas are preparing to invade him; and it is not unlikely, as he has entered into a contract with the Rohillas to attack the Mahrattas, and, I fear, has proceeded to this length on some assurance of our joining him, Whatever may be the intention of the Mahrattas, we are forbid, peremptorily forbid, to be the aggressors, and therefore must wait till they begin, unless the Company's promised instructions shall authorize us to provide against remote and greater danger, by meeting it before it is ripe and ready to fall on us. But it will not be in our power to keep within the peaceable track which is required of us, while the Vizier is left at liberty to draw us, step by step, imperceptibly into his own projects. A person of trust and consequence,

resident with him while the present scene lasts, might effectually check him in his career, by protesting against every measure which tended to an unnecessary breach with the Mahrattas.

This juncture, therefore, and this state of affairs, has drawn our opinions closer to each other, though they are not likely to meet; for I am clearly of opinion that a member of the Board should now be deputed to the Vizier, to explain the Board's intentions, and to advise him in his operations, but to reside with him no longer than the occasion which suggested the commission shall require the continuance of it. Favour me with your opinion upon this proposition. If it is to be carried into execution, it should be resolved on immediately. Indeed, I am told, though I should not believe it, but that I have found the reports to be well grounded,—that the General himself is coming down, which will leave the Vizier altogether at large.

This matter will require other discussions when it is decided that it shall take place.

I now proceed to your second letter, for which accept my thanks, with the assurance that, as I have frequently solicited, so I shall think myself obliged to you for your opinion upon every business of importance. That now before us is of the first. I make no apology for my late reply to it. I do not like to speak without thought, and God knows I have little time for thought, being indebted for the present vacant hour to the kindness of a plentiful shower of rain that has kept off all interruption.

Your observation upon the impossibility of obtaining a perfect system is perfectly just. In many cases we must work as an arithmetician does with his *Rule of False*. We must adopt a plan upon conjecture, try, execute, add, and deduct from it, till it is brought into a perfect shape. Yet this mode is liable to many

inconveniences. It affords scope for the reproach of levity, and the finishing stroke which shall be given to a measure so conducted, though the result of all the former proceedings shall bear away all the credit of it, while the losses, troubles, and embarrassments attending the first experiment, and unavoidably incident, as you justly observe, to all innovations, will be charged to the account of the first projectors. This is precisely our present case. The new government of the Company consists of a confused heap of undigested materials, as wild as the chaos itself. The powers of government are undefined; the collection of the revenue, the provision of the investment, the administration of justice (if it exists at all), the care of the police, are all huddled together, being exercised by the same hands, though most frequently the two latter offices are totally neglected for the want of knowing where to have recourse for them. Added to the difficulties attendant on the arrangement of each, we have them all to separate, and bring into order at once. With such a variety of objects, the little we can do will bear so small a proportion to what we shall leave undone, that I fear, if we escape censure, we have little ground to hope for applause from our superiors. But to come to the point.

We are agreed in the first step to be taken for the management of the Dewannee, *i. e.* the removal of the collections, with all their dependent offices, to Calcutta The mode of inspection which you have proposed, though very clear and well imagined, requires much consideration; and I foresee one ill consequence which is likely to attend it, which makes me dread its institution. You propose twelve separate offices for the collections. That one member of the Board shall be the inspector of each, and one general office which is to receive and control the accounts of the rest,—subject

to whom?—I conclude the president. The arguments by which you support this distribution are very strong and incontrovertible. They can only be opposed by their probable effects thrown into the opposite scale.

Now give me leave to enumerate these effects.

Each inspector will become virtually the collector-general of his division. The emoluments of the collections will be his. He will be the patron of the resident collector (or collectors), and the sovereign of the district, with this singular restriction on his authority, that he must act by a delegated power, and will be responsible for whatever is done in his absence.

You have placed the power of control over those inferior offices in the general office; but how is that control to be exercised? The Bengal accounts are the only accounts by which the collections can be regulated, and the business of the revenue conducted. These will be abstracted and rendered into *unintelligible* English for the office of the sudder. Unintelligible, I say, because it is next to impossible to render them intelligible, nor is there any incitement to render them intelligible. These will be again abstracted, and brought into the general office, the head of which is to *check* and *control* the whole; that is, he is to be the blind and passive instrument of authenticating the acts of the inspectors, or he is to inquire into the particulars of the receipts and disbursements, which can only be done by summoning the officers of the collections, calling for the papers of the mofussul, and comparing them with the abstracts of his own office,—a duty which must inevitably draw on him their enmity whose accounts fall under his inspection. The conclusion is certain and infallible. Even on the supposition that the inspector receives no advantage from his employment, his pride is attacked by every inquiry made by another into the business of which he is the imme-

diate superintendent. Every fraud, oppression, or irregularity detected by another, reflects upon his want of care; and as the collector will consult him on most occasions, and screen himself under his authority, furnishing him with such materials of information alone as he thinks fit; he will of course appeal to his patron against every attack that is made on himself, or attempt to bring him to justice; and the arbitrary inquisitor will have every member of the Board unite against him as the common enemy.

Make whom you will inspector-general—I will not be the man. I will neither be responsible for the acts of others, nor stand forth as the general reformer, and make every man whose friendship and confidence are necessary for my support my inveterate enemy.

Excuse me, my friend, for taking such liberties with your plan. You see the grand principle of my objection, it is the first principle of all my researches, a cordial unanimity with my associates in the administration. It shall never be my fault if I fail in my aim to attain it. In return, I will give you an opportunity to make reprisals by submitting to your judgment and correction such thoughts as have occurred to me on this very interesting subject, for it is not fair to pull down a system without furnishing the materials at least for erecting another. My desire is to accomplish every end that you yourself aim at, and I shall hope to effect it in such a manner as to establish concord and unanimity, instead of furnishing matter of jealousy and disunion, which I dread in your distribution.

But this will lead me too far beyond the bounds of a letter, and four sheets are enough, in conscience, to burthen you with at once. Hereafter, that is the next vacant hour, you shall have the sequel of this discussion. What I have here suggested, I hope will

be received with the same sentiments of candour and friendship with which they were written.

I must here premise that my next letter will be a confidential one. Forgive me the question, but it is necessary:—Are your sentiments towards me of such a nature as to admit of a mutual communication of opinions, without caution or reserve? I shall be satisfied with a simple affirmative in reply. From frequent and unaccountable disappointments, I am compelled to entertain doubts, having met with cold looks, and more than symptoms of dislike sometimes, where I had built the surest hopes of entire good will towards me. Your letters to me betray no such indications, but you best know whether pains have not been taken to inspire them.

I find that a peevish expression accidentally dropped from me at Kishennagur, respecting the suspension of the councils in Calcutta, in which your name was mentioned, has been carefully transmitted to you. I forget the words, for I do not treasure such things in my memory. They are the ideas of a moment, the ideas of a clouded mind, which catch fire, pass, and leave no traces behind them. Something I know I did say, and I know that it has travelled to Calcutta, because I have received it back from Mr. Aldersey, who thinks himself taxed with having said something to me which occasioned it: lest this should hurt him in your opinion, I can assure you most truly that he never said or hinted anything to me from which any conclusion could be drawn to your prejudice.

I make no apology for dwelling so long on such a subject; it is not a trifle, nor can I regard it as such. I beg you will believe me to be with a sincere regard and esteem, dear Sir, your most obedient servant.

Such a letter as the preceding would seem to have deserved at least a respectful perusal. Mr. Barwell appears to have thought otherwise; and the following closed the correspondence of the two members of government on the subject at that time under discussion:—

To RICHARD BARWELL, Esq.

Cossimbazar, 5th August, 1772.

I am favoured with yours of the 26th ultimo and 3rd current. My letter was not meant to express my distrust of others, but to explain what concerned ourselves. You have satisfied me. I should have given you, long before this, the sequel of my thoughts on the main subject of my last, had not the attention which I have been compelled to bestow on other matters of a public and more urgent nature prevented me. Such subjects are not to be wildly treated, with a head embarrassed by a variety of interesting objects. They require a vacant and tranquil mind, an uninterrupted chain of close reasoning, and an undisturbed view of every possible consequence that may arise from the design projected. But your last letter has made it unnecessary for me to resume the subject, for you say you have recorded your sentiments upon it. I hope, however, that, on maturer reflection, and on a perusal of the minutes of the committee upon the motives of the removal of the Dewanny to Calcutta, you will change your opinion, and think your preliminary unnecessary.

To Sir ROBERT BARKER.

Cossimbazar, 28th August, 1772.

Sir,—On revisal of the letters you have occasionally favoured me with, they have not, I perceive, been replied to with the punctuality I could have wished.

The laborious and very important task the Company lately imposed on their administration here, commenced with my accession to it. To fulfil it with any prospect of success adequate to the expectations formed at home. the intermission of many things, and even those of moment, unavoidably ensued. Of this kind has been my whole circle of correspondence. I early discovered the impossibility of applying to general objects (omitting incidental matters), while my regards were concentered, nay commanded to particular ones, of a pressure and embarrassment requiring every effort of application and capacity. To obviate that distraction, which is the invariable result of a divided attention, my only resource was to do one thing at once. The work was arduous, the season unfavourable, the labourers but few, and our time to the September despatches short. Domestic policy and economy are of the first consideration in every state. Where these are affected, foreign concerns can have only a secondary place. A competition with the first exposes the security of both. For the conduct of the latter, indeed, I was less solicitous. They were already in a train, and the direction of it in possession of a gentleman, of whose zeal for the common cause I was thoroughly convinced, and of his passion for its welfare. In this alternative of difficulties my aim has been to choose the least. Rather in regularity and form, than in more essential points, I believe I shall be found defective. Where indispensable, my replies, if I mistake not, have been immediate. To two or three transactions only in your quarter was my interposition particularly required. The rest I was under the necessity to refer to the Board, whose sentiments usually conveyed answers both to your public and private despatches. Defect in minute points will be more easily excused than superfluity; yet if it should seem that I have really tres-

passed on punctilio beyond the strict rules of propriety, I must beg you will confide in my assurances that it has been a source of no inconsiderable mortification and regret to me, and that I cannot pursue my inclinations more agreeably than by the most unreserved correspondence with every member of the Board in every contingency of the public good. Thus bereaved of the freedom of communication, I really consider myself as the sufferer. That I enumerate the causes of my remissness, proceeds from a repugnancy to have my silence misconstrued or ascribed to motives as foreign to my nature as they are remote from my thoughts; for you may rely on my cordial wishes for a perfect conformity of sentiment, where I am confident there is of principle and intention.

My opinion of Major Morrison's engagements corresponds to yours. His letter to the Board is no less rude than intrusive. My counsel has been either to disregard it entirely, or to treat his conduct in the criminal way it deserves, to reject his offers with disdain, and to command his instant departure from the Shah's service. To this purport I should not be averse from making a requisition to the King, were there a prospect of compliance with it; but as we have little at present to bestow on his Majesty, it is not a likely season to obtain Mr. Morrison's dismission as a favour, and nothing exposes weakness so much as demands that cannot be enforced. Pursuant, however, to your advice, his imposition on government shall not escape unnoticed; it will constitute an article in our next general letter, with the necessary comments, and a remonstrance to the directors to represent his artifice, and the eventual mischief of such practices, to the ministry.

Receive, if you please, my thanks for the general returns. Their form is equally methodical and perspicuous, and I should be glad if every officer would

imitate so clear and perfect a model in the construction of theirs.

From the multiplicity of business I myself experience in the military line, I am sensible of the necessity of another assistant to your department. On my return to the presidency, I mean to move your proposal for an adjutant-general, and in the interim should be glad if you would indulge me with such further explanations on the nature of that employment as may serve to instruct the Board, and to secure the continuation of it by justifying the expediency of the appointment to our constituents.

Whether I returned my acknowledgments for the pains and success of your negociation for the removal of Monsieur Gentil, I am not positive. I know I addressed my thanks to the Vizier, and request you will now accept the same for yourself on the like account.

Notwithstanding the disagreeable incidents we encounter on the intricacy of our present operations, yet nothing has given us more uneasiness than the unfavourable impressions you have admitted of our late military arrangements, except it is the style of emotion they are conceived in. One passage of your public letter seems to imply your participation in the original institution of the cavalry; but of this circumstance the Board, at least I can affirm it for myself, was wholly unacquainted. Whatever it might have been in its first design, they never heard the cavalry spoken of otherwise than as a baneful corps, and to their inutility there was not one dissenting voice. Yet had the gentlemen imagined they were an establishment of your projection, or of your choice; that you entertained a predilection in their favour, or had they conceived an idea of your objecting materially to the reform, I believe I can say that there was no indisposition in one individual of the administration to pay the deference due to the com-

mander-in-chief in consulting his judgment on the occasion. But surely you went too far in predicting the Company's ruin, from the reduction of 300 troopers without your consent. The resources within ourselves are not yet, I hope, reduced to so desperate a condition. Your censure of the measure, however, has already gone forth, and I am sorry for it, because, from the poignancy of language and vehemence of argument so pointedly urged against the proceedings of the Board, expressly calculated to excite the resentment of the Company and to awaken their passions, the Council are driven, though reluctantly, to such a reply as may ensure their most ample vindication. To effect this, the cavalry will necessarily be described in darker colours than they ever, of themselves, should have thought of painting them. It cannot be avoided. The Council were willing silently to obviate future abuses, without the ungrateful office and odium of retrospection, and they would still be concerned to bring them all to light; for if we admit the goodness of those troops, or the consistency of their establishment, how, pray, can we be justified to our principals for discarding them? Observations have, in consequence, been made on the paragraph of your public letter, for the sole purpose of asserting our own just intentions. They are now at the presidency, from whence I have been some weeks in expectation of them.

I pass over the indirect reflections on myself in the course of this affair, tending to provoke the resentment of the directors and alarm the jealousy of the Board, by representing me as the promoter of innovation. These contribute in their consequences to affect me much more, I am persuaded, than you meant they should do. I wish they had been spared. I could well have dispensed with them, from the propensity of my temper to live in peace with all men, and the very little leisure I have for controversy.

When you apprized the Board of stationing cadets to Shujah Dowlah's sepoys, it was not meant, I imagine, to be understood by us as a permanent establishment, but as a resolution adapted to a sudden exigency, the success of the Mahrattas, and the supposition of their design to attack the Vizier. I need not dwell upon the apprehensions of the Company and the jealousy of our nation, in general, on proceedings of this tendency, and how obnoxious any measures will appear at home conducing to instruct the powers of this country in that discipline wherein our superiority principally consists. You will excuse, I hope, this intimation. At the same time I can assure you I should be heartily glad to furnish a temporary provision for so many cadets. Your proposals will always have, as they ought to have, their due influence with me. Yet in the present instance I am at a loss to determine whether it is within the compass of my authority to accede to your recommendation to the full extent of what may, perhaps, be expected. At all events, the young gentlemen shall continue to act as officers on their return, an event that I cannot resist expressing my wishes may have already taken place. To supersede the cadets above them on the list, cannot in justice be done. The rule I have adopted, and which I mean never to deviate from but upon some conjuncture that will justify me to the whole world, is to adhere strictly to the Company's register of cadets, and to commission them in the order in which their names stand arranged. The cadets, therefore, who are already ordered to do duty as officers, can have no more than their regular standing when the others come to be promoted. The former were lucky to be selected for service, but the others ought not to suffer for their good fortune.

It does not recur to me to have replied to your proposal of offering the two troops of black cavalry in camp to Shujah Dowlah. I recollect, indeed, to have regarded

it as a circumstance entirely resting with you as comprised in the article of disbanding them.

Neither convenience nor opportunity hitherto allowing the Board to enter on a judicial cognizance of Mahomed Reza Cawn, I have not yet communicated to them his clandestine correspondence with the King. I was desirous to wait for the particular confirmation of it, having myself received intelligence from another quarter, though less authentic, of the same intercourse being extended to a greater length. How far it has been farther prosecuted or traced I would willingly be informed before we proceed ultimately on his examination.

For the more regular despatch of the supernumerary returns to you, strict injunctions have been issued. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant.

To Sir ROBERT BARKER.

1st November, 1772.

Sir,—I find myself at a loss to reply to your letter, because in defending the character of Captain Harper it seems to oppose an opinion which I never entertained. My objections to his continuance with the Vizier are very foreign from those which you have combated, and have no relation to them. I believe him to be a brave and active officer, a man of integrity, of political abilities, and of a genius and talents suited to the place which he has so long filled. These qualities report gives him. Of his understanding I have conceived a very high opinion from what I have seen of his correspondence. I have mentioned to you the reasons which urge me, which make it my duty to object to his present residence. Had this point been contested without any prior endeavours to force the Board into a compliance with it, the motives which have been publicly assigned for his removal might, perhaps, have been

overruled. No design, at least no determination, had been formed for it.

The perpetual establishment of the channel of correspondence with the Vizier in one person had been often mentioned as attended with many inconveniences. I see and feel that it deprives the government of its influence in that court, and of the means of conducting their political operations in that quarter conformably to their own ideas and principles. A cold implicit obedience to the orders of his superiors, which can accommodate itself to every change of opinions which a change of men may give occasion to, I do not expect from any man in that station who is capable of thinking for himself. Personal attachments or some favourite maxims will unavoidably get possession of his mind and influence his conduct, and these prepossessions will become more powerful in proportion to the length of time in which he has acted in such a capacity.

It may, therefore, be judged necessary that, where the intervention of an agent is required for the management of the political system, he should be well instructed in the principles on which it is grounded, and have no prejudices of his own to encounter in the execution of it. That the Governor, whom the Company have expressly declared to be the only channel allowed by them of communication with the powers of the country, and on whom the whole responsibility in effect resides, should be denied the choice of such means as he may approve for executing so important a trust, and be compelled to employ an agent whom he does not know, is another powerful objection, and with me an insuperable one. There may be others, which I now forbear to mention. None, however, were declared; but it had been whispered in Council that such existed. The Vizier heard them. In an irregular and most unbecoming manner he insisted on Captain H.'s

continuance, and protested against any other resident. He was assured, in reply, the Board had no design of sending another; that they considered Captain H. only as a commander of the sepoys, which had been accidentally stationed near his person, and not as a representative of this government; that we saw the necessity for one, and desired him to permit Captain H. to leave him and rejoin the corps which he belonged to. The Vizier rejoined and persisted in his demand. Captain H. then, and not till then, expressed his sentiments, and intimated his wishes on the occasion. He had hitherto remained silent, relying most assuredly (for he could not be ignorant of the Vizier's requisition in his favour) on the Vizier's influence for the security of his post. I will not add any reflections on this subject; but I declare that I think the Board could not in honour or duty have complied with a recommendation of such a nature, so made, nor after their refusal and declaration recall both on any remonstrances which the Vizier can urge, without subjecting their resolutions to the imputation of levity or timidity, or improper influence. On this subject every man seems to have adopted a line of his own. I want no substitute to Captain H.; I see no occasion for any. I think we injure ourselves and invert the nature of the obligations between the Company and the Vizier by such appointments, which imply nothing less than his absolute dependence on us for support, and total want of importance to our interests.

With respect to the trade carried on by Captain H. and its effects on that of the Company and their credit, it might lead me too far beyond the bounds of a letter, which I have already exceeded. If Captain Harper insists on a public inquiry into the truth of the reports concerning him, I shall not oppose it; but though I have declared to you that this objection has

much weight with me, yet it is only an objection within my own breast. I wish not to be obliged to make a public one of it. I am much concerned that our sentiments on this point (and I hope on this only) differ so materially, as I wish most heartily that on all occasions our opinions, inclinations, and studies may unite in the support of the common cause, the interest and honour of our common masters. I am, with the highest esteem and regard, &c.

The following contains an excellent summary of the issues of these varied arrangements. I therefore insert it, as releasing me at once from further consideration of this part of my subject :—

To JOHN SULIVAN, Esq.

(per Hector), 2nd April, 1772.

Dear Sir,—In the uncertainty in which I still remain concerning your destination, I cannot write to you either with the confidence or satisfaction which I felt in my former correspondence. Indeed I have not much to write, as every public letter is in effect an address from me to you, and leaves me little to add upon the subject of public affairs.

The inquiry into the conduct of Rajah Shitabroy has concluded,—at least little remains for decision,—as I expected. I never thought him culpable; I never accused him, nor did the Court of Directors express any suspicion which ever glanced at his conduct.

Mahomed Rezza Cawn's examination is begun, but suspended for want of time. It will be resumed immediately, and we shall meet, I believe, every evening to conclude the first charge against him, viz., the purchase and sale of grain, by his orders, in the year of the famine. The others are articles of accounts, and will not require so close and personal an attention.

The settlement of the province on a lease of five years, of which one is already past, is at length completed. The desolation of the province by the famine, of which the effects are yet evident, and perhaps more than formerly, on the revenue; the remission of the Bazy Jummah, the Zimindarree customs, and the tax on marriages; and the suspension of the collections while the settlement was forming (as a watch must stand while you wind it), have contributed to prejudice the income of this year. Yet the balance outstanding is inconsiderable, being not more than the amount of the charges, and I hope will realize the yearly increase.

This packet carries home a plan of the new system adopted for the customs, which I recommend to your perusal. I think it a most beneficial innovation, and more likely to revive the commerce of the country than any regulation of which I have a conception.

A plan is on foot, and nearly completed, for a public bank for the purpose of transmitting money to and from the different parts of the country and the presidency, both for the collections and for the trade of individuals. I have sent a copy of the draught as it now stands to Sir George Colebrooke, and desired him to show it to you, as I want time and hands to make another copy.

The last ship carried home a final adjustment of the Nabob's annual expenses, which have been brought within the amount of his reduced stipend,—a work more difficult than it will appear. The Begum still objects to some articles in it, but I shall find no difficulty in accommodating them to her satisfaction. The point which I aimed at was to bring the sum within six lacs, which I am resolved shall not be exceeded. She conducts herself with much moderation, and has hitherto shown no inclination to contest the authority of our government, although, I fear, she has not wanted a prompter in Nundcomar, whom I keep at as great

a distance from her as I can to prevent him from making mischief. In his absence from the Durbar no harm can happen, as his son and son-in-law, one the Dewan and the other Naib of the Nizamut, are more ready to counteract each other's designs than join in a plot to hurt our government.

The business of the new board of revenue, and of the office of the calsa, go on as regularly as if both had been instituted from the first establishment of Calcutta. Our courts of justice want only time and leisure in the members of the government, which must both give and continue their first motion to perfect them.

In a word, the sovereign authority of the Company is firmly rooted in every part of the provinces and every branch of the state, nor can anything hereafter weaken or affect it if your administration is well supported at home.

The General returned last month to rejoin the first brigade, which was ordered to assist the Vizier, with permission to carry his operations into the Rohilla country, lying north of Oude, and included by the Ganges, if he found it necessary; to defend Cora and the province of Illahbad, for the king, and to take immediate possession of it, but not to pass the boundary of that district.

He has properly used the latitude allowed him in the first part of his instructions, having conducted the army beyond the Vizier's territories to the bank of the Ganges, lying opposite Furrookhabad. The Mahrattas, by the last advices, were preparing to retire, and I hope the campaign will prove a peaceable one.

I am happy in informing you that I find in all the members of the Board (I know not whether I can yet say without one exception) a cordial disposition to support and co-operate with me. A disunion at this time would be productive of certain ruin.

When I mention the Council, I scarce consider the General a member of it. I had taken much pains to remove and obviate everything which might breed uneasiness between him and the Board, and we parted with declarations of mutual confidence, sincere I am sure on my part. Long before this he had made many efforts, both public and private, to obtain the repeal of an order of the Board for the recall of Captain Harper from the Vizier's court; but without effect. The Board persisted in their resolution, and I have more than once declared it was a point which I would not give up. He acquiesced, wrote to Captain Harper, who was on his way down, to stay at Patna; wrote to me on his arrival there, that, meeting with Captain Harper on the way, he had ordered him to return with him, and he has taken him back. I informed the Board of this strange behaviour. They, unwilling to enter into an altercation on the commencement of the campaign, contented themselves with issuing a public order that Captain Harper should come to the presidency, and that no officer of any rank should detain him. They have entered into no correspondence with him nor recorded more of the affair than I have mentioned, that he may, if he chooses, put an end to it; it rests with him to make it more serious. From such little springs flow the rivers of discord. I have reason to believe that much has been written, and much will be written, on this frivolous subject,—frivolous I must say on one side only, as it makes a servant, and an inferior servant of the government, a party in a public and even a national contest with it. Should it be deemed worth notice at home, letme entreat you to read the consultations upon this subject. You will find them in the proceedings of the secret department of the following dates, viz., 30th September, 1st and 2d October, and the select committee proceedings of the 7th of January, referred to the Board at large.

In two words, I wish to make the Vizier depend on government and not on the military power, and I want to open a free trade into the Vizier's dominions, which are now subject to a military monopoly. I can do neither while the military agent remains, and therefore I conclude, so much intrigue and violence are employed to retain him.

You will meet with a strange and uncommon proposal delivered in by Mr. Barwell, after the despatch of our last ship. It had an evident view to raise great expectations at home, and to build a reputation to the proposer at the expense of the members of administration. The close of the last despatches is an untimely season for a speculative contest; but it has been answered and the proposal condemned. It was unfairly introduced at a time, too, when we were all agreed on adopting some mode for reducing the Company's debt by paying off the capital. Whenever it is suggested that any part of the Company's interests have not been duly attended to, I heartily wish you to look over the bulky consultations in the three departments, and turn to the names at the head of them. I have not (that I recollect) missed one since my return to the presidency, and have given almost every hour besides to business, which I take upon me to say has rested wholly on me during the late absence of the committee. I am, with the sincerest and most affectionate regard and esteem, dear Sir, &c.

CHAPTER X.

Foreign relations of the Company—Treaty of Benares—Letters on various Subjects.

The judicial and financial affairs of the country being thus reduced to comparative order, Mr. Hastings proceeded next to consider the state of its foreign relations; of which it is not going too far to assert that, taking the power of the Company into account, they were in every respect disgraceful to the British character. With the exception of the King, Shah Allum, and Shujah Dowlah, the Nabob of Oude, there was not a crowned head throughout the length and breadth of Hindostan, with whom, either for good or for evil, the Bengal government maintained any settled communication. The native powers, without a single exception, looked indeed upon the English with a jealous eye. They envied them their seeming greatness; they dreaded the spirit of encroachment by which they appeared to be actuated; and would have gladly united, had there been any master hand to direct them, in a common effort to drive them from their shores. But nowhere was the English name held in respect; neither had they influence enough, except by force of arms, either to carry a favourite point for themselves, or to restrain the weakest

of their neighbours from seeking to carry it. Mr. Hastings was too profound a politician not to be aware, that a perseverance in this system of isolation and exclusiveness was impossible. Neither in Asia nor in Europe can nations stand still, and stand alone. If they fail to hedge themselves round with useful alliances, they must depend absolutely upon the sword for existence; and the people which has sufficient military strength to exist by the sword alone, must go on continually enlarging the bounds of their dominions. Mr. Hastings, therefore, felt that even for the sake of that pacific policy which in all the Court's letters from home was so vehemently recommended, it would be necessary to put the foreign relations of Bengal on a better footing; and he lost no time in submitting to his Council his own views as to the best means of doing so.

Mr. Hastings's first object, of course, was to place himself and his government in a just light towards the powers with which they were already connected. These were the Mogul, or Emperor, or King Shah Allum, and the Nabob Vizier of Oude, Shujah Dowlah; of whose respective claims upon the English, and of the causes in which they originated, the following may be received as a correct outline.

So early as the year 1764, Shujah Dowlah, having espoused the cause of Cossim Ali, marched an army into Bengal, whither he carried in his train the

Emperor Shah Allum, at that time a fugitive from his own capital, and virtually a prisoner in the Vizier's hands. The English at first retreated before the invaders, but by and bye fought a successful battle under the walls of Patna. They followed it up with vigour; and achieving a second victory in the neighbourhood of Buxar, they drove the Vizier back upon Benares, and reduced him to an extremity. I need not describe, at length, how General Carnac negociated with the fallen chief; or how the Vizier surrendered both his dominions and his person into the power of the conqueror. Never was success more complete; while the uses to which Mr. Spencer, at that time President or Governor of Fort William, proposed to turn it were these.

While the struggle was going on, a third actor had shown himself upon the stage, namely, Bulwant Sing, the Rajah of Benares and Ghazepoor;—not an independent prince, as the use of the term Rajah might lead the ordinary reader to suppose, but one of Shujah Dowlah's great vassals, or managers of portions of his dominions. With the history of this man's rise to power it is necessary that the reader should be acquainted. For whatever the rights might be which appertained to him, the same, and no more, clearly descended to his successor; whose position nothing short of a royal phirman could

alter, and in favour of whom no phirman ever was, as far as I know, either applied for or obtained.

Bulwant Sing was the son of one Manseram, the joint holder with three brothers of a small zemindarry, of which the profits supplied the whole family with an annual income, never exceeding in amount four thousand rupees. The zemindarry in question adjoined to the more extensive zemindarry of Ghazepoor, which, as well as Benares, formed a portion of the kingdom of Oude; and Manseram, who seems to have been a person of talent, found occupation there under the Phousdar, Rustan Alli. This was during the reign of Shujah Dowlah's father. But Rustan Alli was an indolent man; he had, moreover, fallen into arrear with his payments, and gladly made over to his agent all authority in the district, on the assurance that his debts should be discharged, and himself saved from further trouble. The latter promise was certainly kept, though not in the sense on which Rustan Alli had counted. For Manseram no sooner felt his own importance in the district than he made use of it to crush his indulgent master, and Rustan Alli died in prison, while Manseram became Phousdar in his room.

To Manseram succeeded, as Phousdar of Ghazepoor, Bulwant Sing: for official occupations, equally with lordships and crowns, have always tended in India to become hereditary in particular families.

He followed in his father's steps with such zeal, that his neighbours, one after another, gave way before him; till by and bye he stood forth as one of the most influential of the Nabob's vassals, having obtained a confirmation of his authority, not over Ghazepoor alone, but over the still more extensive districts of Benares and Brudjegur. Hence when, in 1764, a British army for the first time crossed the Carumnassah, this man was found at the head of ten thousand horse; which he kept on foot ostensibly for his master's service, though in reality, and as the event proved, with a view to employ them in whatever way might appear to hold out the best promise of advancing his own personal interests, and enlarging his own political influence.

When nations engage in war, there is no repugnance on either side to enlist in its own favour the services of any portion of the rival populations which may chance to be dissatisfied with the government under which they live.* In this spirit the English gladly listened to Bulwant Sing's proposals; and encouraged the demonstration which he proposed to make against the prince whom he was bound by his allegiance to defend. They gained little, it is true, from his active friendship for awhile, because Bulwant Sing proved faithless to both parties; but at least they detached him from the service of the Nabob; and towards the close of the war he found it convenient to enter

into their policy. The consequence was, that when hostilities terminated, Mr. Spencer found that there were three separate parties with whom it behoved him to treat; namely, the King Shah Allum, Shujah Dowlah the Vizier, and Bulwant Sing Rajah of Benares, heretofore the vassal but now the rebel, and the successful rebel, against the Vizier's authority.

Mr. Spencer was exceedingly indignant with Shujah Dowlah. He determined, therefore, that from him further means of creating disturbances should be taken away; in other words he resolved to strip him of his dominions, to allow him a small pension for his subsistence and that of his family, and to keep him ever after in the station of a private person. With respect to the principality of Oude, he proposed thus to dispose of it: to Benares and the districts dependent on it, he, in the name of the Company, laid claim; while at the same time, he engaged to continue Bulwant Sing in the management, subject to the same payments, and liable to the same services which he formerly owed to the Vizier. All the rest he was prepared to make over to the King, whom he further undertook to conduct, under a guard of British troops, to Delhi, and there to establish him on the throne of his ancestors. Meanwhile, Nudjam ul Dowlah was to become Nabob of Bengal, in the room of his deceased father, Meer

Jaffier, and from him the English were to receive a monthly payment of five lacs, in order to cover the expenses of the troops which they might find it necessary to keep on foot, for the purpose of maintaining him on the throne.

These were Mr. Spencer's plans; but before he could carry them into execution, Lord Clive came out to take upon himself the charge of the government; and the whole device underwent a change. Lord Clive entirely disapproved of the measure of vengeance which his predecessor desired to mete out against the Vizier. He accordingly proceeded in a more placable spirit to Allahabad, where in the month of August, 1765, he met the native princes, and entered with them into a new treaty, which has ever since been alluded to by historians under the name of the place within which it was prepared. By the treaty of Allahabad, then, Shujah Dowlah was formally reinstated in his sovereignty of Oude. Even the rajh or zemindarry of Benares was given back to him, with this understanding that Bulwant Sing should continue at its head; and that his regular annual payments should not exceed the amount for which he had heretofore been liable. Meanwhile, that the King might not go without his advantages also, to him the provinces of Corah, Currah, and Allahabad were made over, — a narrow territory situated between the Ganges and the Jumna, and up to that

moment constituting a portion of Shujah Dowlah's hereditary dominions. Finally, in return for the phirman which conferred upon the English the Duannee, or right of collecting the revenues over Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, Lord Clive undertook to pay as tribute to the King the annual sum of twenty-six lacs, which being calculated in English money may be taken as something more than three hundred thousand pounds sterling.

In pursuance of the terms of this treaty, Shujah Dowlah re-entered his palace at Lucknow, Bulwant Sing played the part of Viceroy at Benares, while Shah Allum asserted his authority in the ceded provinces. He could not, however, prevail upon Clive to carry him back in triumph to Delhi; and growing impatient of further delay, he finally threw himself into the arms of the Mahrattas. This act of his entirely changed the nature of his connexion both with the English and with the Vizier. The Mahrattas were the avowed enemies of the latter; to the former they were at least not friendly; and as the English were bound to support the Vizier as often as he might require their assistance, a war between him and his restless neighbours must lead to an immediate rupture between them and the English. For it had been part of Lord Clive's policy, while he affected to deprecate all interference of his countrymen in the quarrels or alliances of the native powers, so to mix up the concerns of Bengal with

those of Oude, that the one became little else than a mere dependency on the other. Thus, after protesting against the march of a single soldier beyond the line of the Carumnassah, he consented to the establishment of a whole brigade in Allahabad, the payment of which drew from Fort William in the course of five years not less than two millions sterling. This was a ruinous drain upon the circulating medium of Bengal, to which not a rupee either in bullion or in merchandise returned; and the paltry payment by the Vizier of thirty thousand rupees per month was scarcely felt as a relief, except perhaps by the officers in command of the troops, who reaped no trivial benefit to their private fortunes from the arrangement.

The treaty of Allahabad had not much in it which was likely to meet with Mr. Hastings's approbation; and recent events were little calculated to remove the objections which he might have originally entertained to it. Every payment now made to the King was, in point of fact, a payment made to the Mahrattas, in whose hands he had been a mere tool which they wielded without scruple to their own uses. Moreover the King had, in more than one way, exhibited, of late, a disposition the reverse of friendly to the Company. In the first place, his attempt, through Major Morrison, to open a direct communication with the Crown of England could not be acceptable, either

to the Court of Directors, or to the local authorities which represented them in India. In the next place, Mr. Hastings was not ignorant that Shah Allum had formally made over to the Mahrattas the provinces of Corah, Currah, and Allahabad, which the English had assigned to him, not for the purpose of having established there a colony of marauders, but as a territory from which he might derive some means wherewith to support the dignity of the crown. It was clear, therefore, to Mr. Hastings, that the time had come for dealing with the Mogul as with a shadow. Accordingly he made up his mind, not only to withhold the arrears which were due, and which the pressure of the famine in 1769 and 1770 had occasioned; but to refuse in future all payments, whether claimed on the ground of ancient usage, or referred to the terms of the convention of Allahabad. It does not appear that his view of the case met with any serious opposition from the members of the Supreme Council. They, like himself, felt that every saving made in the public expenditure was important; and they could not, any more than he, understand the wisdom of handing over to the King sums which would immediately be applied to their own injury, or to that of their ally the Nabob Shujah Dowlah.

The King's demand for the arrear of tribute was rejected, and it was plainly announced to him,

that in future he must not look to the East India Company for any annual payments whatever. Far be it from me to defend this proceeding on the ground of abstract right. The rigid moralist is justified in affirming, that having bound themselves unconditionally to furnish the Mogul with three hundred thousand pounds sterling, per annum, the Company had no business to inquire into the uses to which the money might be applied. But the politician will take of this matter a different view; and it is as a politician, rather than as a moralist, that Mr. Hastings must, I apprehend, on the present occasion, be tried. Nor is this all. Mr. Hastings and his colleagues came equally to the conclusion, that though they might be willing to maintain the King in his sovereignty over the provinces that had been ceded to him, they were not bound to sanction the establishment there of a people avowedly hostile. They therefore made up their minds to resume the grant which Lord Clive, under different circumstances, had conceded, and to occupy with troops the most important posts of the districts, so as to hinder it from sustaining hurt from any sudden incursion of the enemy. Yet there was no disposition, either on Mr. Hastings's part or on the part of the Council, to lay so heavy a load upon the Company's exchequer as would be required to maintain these garrisons on a permanent footing. Corah, Currah, and Allahabad

were too far removed from the Company's frontier to be retained in the Company's possession, except at a ruinous expense; and the same forethought which suggested the wisdom of excluding from them hordes of Mahrattas, pointed out the means of securing this advantage without any detriment to the exhausted treasury of Calcutta. The idea was suggested of selling them to the Vizier, whose anxiety to recover so fair a portion of the dominions of his ancestors was well known; and the project being favourably entertained, to Mr. Hastings it was left by the Council to devise the best and speediest means of carrying it into execution.

While the Council at Fort William were devising plans for the restoration to the Vizier of the districts which he had lost, the Vizier himself was meditating schemes of aggrandisement and conquest, which in the course of a long correspondence with Mr. Hastings he opened out, and of which it is my business to explain both the origin and the progress.

Adjoining to the kingdom of Oude, so as to be to it, both in its geographical and political relation, what Scotland was to England previous to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, lay a tract of country, of which the southern frontier was open, but which to the west, and north, and east was bounded by the Ganges and the mountains of Tartary. Into that district a band of plunderers called Rohillas,

an Affghan tribe, had, about half a century prior to the period of which we are now speaking, made their way; and being greatly superior in the use of arms to the quiet and unoffending people who dwelt there, they soon made themselves masters of the country and called it after their own name. There was nothing unusual either in this or in the consequences that resulted from it. The sword has in all ages been the arbiter of men's destinies in Asia, where the right of conquest is just as firmly established in five years as in five hundred. But when the victorious adventurers refuse to be at rest, and go on seeking continually to push their conquests further; then, indeed, the parties liable to suffer from their turbulence are surely not to blame if they endeavour to extirpate them. Such was precisely the case in reference to the Rohillas and their neighbours on every side. Delighting in plunder, though seldom without a view to effect a permanent extension of their sovereignty, the Rohillas carried their arms at one time to the very gates of Delhi, and more than once came into collision with the armies of Oude. With the Mahrattas, likewise, they had frequent encounters, sometimes singly, sometimes in combination with the King and the Vizier. But they were too weak, in point of numbers, to sustain for ever such a complication of wars. They therefore narrowed by degrees their circle of

hostilities, and were glad in the end to find in an alliance with the Vizier, protection from a power which they had rashly provoked and were unable to resist.

The Rohillas would have willingly drawn the Vizier into an offensive war with the people whom they hated. To this, however, the Vizier would not agree; partly because he knew that the English were averse to the measure, and partly because he had himself nothing to gain by it. When, however, the Mahrattas took possession of the Dooab, Shujah Dowlah's scruples gave way, and he felt that it was time to interfere. He accordingly concluded with the Rohillas a treaty, by which he bound himself to protect them, in case the Mahrattas should make a demonstration against their country; while they agreed to assist him in wresting the Dooab from the common enemy, and to pay forty lacs of rupees towards defraying the expenses of the war. The Rohillas complained that the Vizier never rendered them any effectual aid, nor of course fulfilled his engagements. Their story was taken up, and repeated for party purposes, both in the House of Commons and at Mr. Hastings's trial in Westminster Hall; but it is surely without foundation. If more active measures were not taken, the fault lay, not with Shujah Dowlah, but with Sir Robert Barker, who kept his brigade on the north side of the Ganges, and

without whose co-operation the Vizier could do nothing. Yet even this movement in advance, sluggish as it may be called, proved essentially serviceable to the Rohillas, for it hindered the permanent establishment of a Mahratta force in the heart of the country, and at least saved their independence. The Rohillas, on the other hand, were no sooner delivered from the apprehensions of immediate danger, by the retreat of the Mahrattas, than they entirely forgot the serious obligations under which they had come. They resisted all Shujah Dowlah's applications for the forty lacs, and made preparations to overrun the Dooab, not for him, but for themselves. The Vizier was greatly irritated, as he had good cause to be, with conduct so fickle, and proposed to Mr. Hastings that it should be signally punished. In plain language, he hinted at the wisdom, as well as the justice, of displacing these Affghans altogether, and annexing their territory to that of Oude. Now I really cannot see upon what grounds, either of political or moral justice, this proposition deserves to be stigmatised as infamous. The Rohillas were mere usurpers, owing, like the English, their authority in Rohilcund, only to their swords. They were a military body, perfectly distinct, both in their manners and in their habits, from the population which they governed; and if too feeble to maintain themselves in rights which were but

those of conquest after all, it was not to be expected that the Vizier should put his own throne in jeopardy in order to maintain them. Moreover, the Rohillas had exhibited the reverse of good faith towards the Vizier. They were a constant thorn in his side; and tottering to their fall, the question for him to decide was, whether he would submit to the occupation of their country by the Mahrattas, or himself take possession, and convert what had heretofore been a source of weakness into a source of strength to himself and to the English. The Vizier seems to have had neither difficulty nor scruple in coming to a decision on the matter. He at once demanded the assistance of the English in a war to which both outraged honour, and a feeling of self-protection, urged him; and Mr. Hastings, though he would have gladly avoided the extremity, appears to have felt all along that to such he might eventually be driven.

The game of politics between nation and nation is, I am afraid, but a gambling transaction at the best. Diplomatists may hide the real nature of their designs under whatever form of words they choose to select; but they are poor masters of their craft if they fail to keep the obvious truth in view, that their first duty in all transactions with foreign states is to secure some solid advantages for their own. I am far from believing that Mr. Hastings did not feel the force of Shujah Dowlah's argu-

ments. Like the rest of the Indian world, he beheld at that moment the growing power of the Mahrattas with alarm, and was not less willing than the Vizier himself to impose some check upon it. But he was anxious, at the same time, that in the benefits which the Nabob of Oude expected to derive from the accomplishment of his project, the East India Company should participate; and as the Company was not only not desirous of any extension to their territory, but positively averse to it, he determined, in another and a more acceptable way, to serve them. Mr. Hastings resolved that the Vizier should pay in money for the assistance which he craved. Moreover, the point being a delicate one to settle, and Indian correspondence proverbially diffuse and vague, he came to the conclusion that it would scarce be settled at all, at least to the satisfaction of both parties, except by a personal interview. Under this impression, he applied to his Council for leave to meet the Vizier at Benares, and for full powers to enter with him there into all manner of discussions. The permission and powers were alike granted, and Mr. Hastings went his way; and the results were such as he has himself stated in the following series of letters:—

To Sir George Colebrooke.

Fort William, 12th October, 1773.

Dear Sir,—I have been much disappointed in not seeing your name in the new direction, but I shall continue to communicate to you as I have hitherto done such events and transactions in this Government, as I shall judge to be proper objects of your notice.

In my last I mentioned to you a project which the Vizier had formed of conquering the Rohilla country situated on the north of his, and annexing it to his dominions, which would have been a great acquisition of territory, wealth, and security, and brought all his possessions within a complete natural boundary. The correspondence upon this subject introduced the proposal of an interview between us, which accordingly took place. I left Calcutta for this purpose the 24th June, had a meeting with the Vizier at Benares, where I remained three weeks, and returned to the presidency the 4th of this month.

The Rohilla expedition, to which I had offered my agreement on the consideration of obtaining a saving to the Company of one-third of the expenses of their whole army, and the payment of forty lacs on the conclusion of it, was suspended at the motion of the Vizier himself, who feared his ability to fulfil the conditions of it.

The disposal of the districts of Cora and Illahabad was the next business of my negociations. The King having given them to the Mahrattas, we reclaimed them as the original proprietors, on the plea that they had been given to the King for his sole use, and when his property in them ceased, we had a right to dispute them with any new proprietor, especially with so dangerous a neighbour as the Mahratta state. We accordingly took possession, and it was left with me to dispose of them in such a way as should be most conformable

to the Company's interests, and the rights of others. Although the King was confessedly unable to maintain them, still I wished for his concurrence in whatever plan might be adopted for their disposal. I wrote to him in pressing terms to send a person of confidence to treat on that and other affairs in which he might be concerned. He appointed a man of distinction to appear at the meeting, but afterwards recalled him, and referred me to the Vizier, and to his Naib Moneer O' Dowla, who had the government of these districts, to whom the only orders which he gave were to demand the arrears of the tribute due from Bengal, the punctual payment of it in future, and the restitution of Cora and Illahabad.

Thus circumstanced, and knowing that to give up these lands to him would in reality be to give them again to the Mahrattas, our enemies, and exposing the dominions of the Vizier, our ally, which joined to them, to almost certain ruin, I resolved to assert the right of the Company to the possession of them, and to convert them to such uses as their value and the necessities of the Company required. I ceded them to the Vizier for the consideration of fifty lacs of rupees, twenty to be paid in ready money, fifteen at the expiration of one year, and fifteen at the expiration of two years from the date of the treaty (viz., the 7th of September.)

It is also stipulated in the treaty that whenever the Vizier shall have occasion for the aid of our forces, he shall pay for them 210,000 rupees per month, being the computed amount of their whole expense. This is still called an extra expense, as the treaty of 1765 stipulates only that he shall pay the extra expense, which was fixed by General Smith at 30,000 rupees, was raised in the beginning of the last year to 115,000, and is now immoveably settled by treaty.

I have obtained a confirmation from the Vizier of the zemindarry of Gauzypoor, &c., in favour of Rajah Cheit Sing and his posterity, on the same tenure, and with the same rights, that were granted to his father Bulwunt Sing in the treaty of 1765.

I have settled with Rajah Cheit Sing an equal plan of customs for all goods passing from Bengal to Merzapoor, which is the great mart of his and the Vizier's dominions, excepting the articles of broad cloth, copper and lead, bought at the Company's sales, which are to pay no duties.

These are the only points of consequence which I have effected.

By the cession of Cora, &c., the Company is freed from the intolerable burthen of defending that country for the King, and they acquire a vast sum of money for parting with what they could not have kept, a seasonable supply to the deficient circulation of Bengal, and to the public treasury, which, when I left it, had scarce a rupee in it, and was loaded with a debt of a crore and a half of rupees.

By the article regarding the payment of our forces employed for the Vizier, we remove all the objections which before attended every movement of our army, and have made it the interest of the Company to give him the assistance he wants, as it will prove an immediate saving of the whole charge of almost one-third of the army.

I have declared to the King that I would not consent to let a rupee pass out of Bengal till it had recovered from its distresses, which had been principally occasioned by the vast drains that had been made of its specie for his remittances. The Board have confirmed this declaration by a formal resolution that no more money shall be paid him till the Company's pleasure is known.

I dare not enter into the reasonings on these various subjects, which would be endless. My conduct has been unanimously approved by the Board, the General excepted, who has objected to every part of it.

I am not apt to attribute a large share of merit to my own actions, but I own that this is one of the few to which I can with confidence affix my own approbation. At another time I will furnish you with the voluminous materials which compose our record of this transaction. I fear you will not have leisure to read them.

If the Court of Directors shall think it proper to disclaim what I have done, they must also point out the means of undoing it. They must cancel the treaty, (which God forbid;) they must repay what they shall have received from the Vizier, and relinquish their claim to the rest; they must discharge the arrears of the tribute, and punctually pay the future yearly demands of twenty-six lacs to the King. But from what fund these great things are to be done, I am sure they will be unable to direct. In a word, I have been happily furnished with an accidental concourse of circumstances to relieve the Company in the distress of their affairs, by means, which, in my judgment, the most partial advocate of the King cannot on their own principles disapprove, but which on mine were never wanting; as I conceive, in strict political justice, the King never had a right to a rupee from Bengal, nor from Cora, after he had parted with it.

I do not imagine that I shall have any future occasion to leave this presidency, until it shall please my employers to put a period to my services, and shall now devote my time to the reduction of the inordinate expenses of this Government, and to the support of the regulations which have already been formed. In the former much has been done, and in justice I must say, a

great deal in the time in which I was absent, but much remains to be done. In the latter lie our greatest difficulties. A long habit of licentiousness, strong temptations, the cursed encouragements of patronage, and the sturdiness of independence, are too great evils to combat with the weak powers of this Government, which many possess and none can exercise.

I have the pleasure to inform you that we enjoy a prospect of one year's peace. The Mahrattas are retired to their own country, and by the last advice from Fort St. George, we hear that a revolution has been made in their Government by the violent death of Narrain Row their chief, and the elevation of his uncle Ragonaut Row. I am not sufficiently acquainted with his character and circumstances to form a conjecture of the consequences which may follow this event.

The following discusses the same topics more at length:—

To Laurence Sulivan, Esq.

Fort William, 12th October, 1773.

Dear Sir,—I meet in every packet from England such reverses of good and ill news that I begin to grow indifferent to both, from the belief that in the instant in which I read the intelligence of past transactions, their effects are vanished, and new events and new designs have succeeded them. This instability in the affairs at home does injury to those of Bengal, and weakens the authority not only of the Government but of the Company. I scarce know why I make this complaint to you, but that it was uppermost in my mind, since it is not in the power of an individual to apply the remedy to an evil which seems to run through every branch of our constitution; it adds considerably to the weight of my difficulties.

I have already advised you, in my letter of the 2d

April, of the state of our affairs at that period. I shall confine this to a single subject.

The loose manner in which our concerns with the Vizier were conducted, and the great expense which attended every movement of our army for his service, first suggested the expediency of an interview with him for the purpose of adjusting these and other points which might furnish occasion for future discussion. A new subject presented itself; The Rohilla chiefs, when attacked by the Mahrattas, made an offer of forty lacs of rupees to the Vizier, of which he promised to give half to the Company, for his assistance, and engaged themselves to pay it by a solemn treaty. We have delivered them from the Mahrattas, and the Rohillas have paid nothing. The Vizier, judging this a fair occasion to go to war with them, applied to us for our assistance, engaging to pay fifty lacs of rupees besides the extra charges of the army whenever their country should be reduced. The correspondence upon this subject introduced the proposal of a meeting between us. The Board approved of it, and Benares was the place appointed for it. I accordingly set out on the 24th of June with instructions and full powers from the Board, and arrived at Benares the 19th of August, where I found the Vizier. I had written repeatedly and pressingly to the King to request that he would send a person with full powers to treat on his affairs. He did not, but referred me to the Vizier and Moneer O' Dowlah, whom he instructed to demand the arrears of his tribute from Bengal, regular monthly payments for the future, and the restitution of Corah and Allahabad to his Naib Moneer O' Dowlah.

Before I proceed I must describe the situation of the Rohilla country which the Vizier proposed to reduce. It lies open on the south. It is bounded on the west by the Ganges, and on the north and east by

the mountains of Tartary. It is to the province of Oude, in respect both to its geographical and political relation, exactly what Scotland was to England before the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The reduction of this territory would have completed the defensive line of the Vizier's dominions, and of course left us less to defend, as he subsists on our strength entirely. It would have added much to his income, in which we should have had our share.

I agreed to assist him in this project on condition of his paying the Company an acknowledgment of forty lacs of rupees, and the whole expense of our troops employed by him, computed at 210,000 rupees for a brigade.

As the King had forfeited his right to Corah and Allahabad, by giving them to the Mahrattas, from whom he had reclaimed and resumed them; as he was confessedly unable to keep them by his own strength, and we could not afford to maintain them any longer for him; and as he had declined to send any person to the conference, and thus left me unprovided with the means of concerting any plan in which his interests might be included, I agreed to restore this country to the Vizier on condition of his paying to the Company forty-five lacs of rupees.

Things were thus adjusted when the Vizier, fearing that he had engaged beyond his ability, desired to decline the Rohilla expedition, to which I readily agreed; but as he would have less to pay and less to lay out, the acknowledgment for Corah, &c. was increased to fifty lacs, payable twenty in ready money, fifteen in one year, and fifteen in two from the date of the treaty; and the payment for the monthly charge of our forces employed in his service still stands an article in the treaty fixed at 210,000 rupees.

This, Sir, I consider as a point gained of great im-

portance; it will prevent the wanton requisition of our aid on every frivolous occasion, and when they are employed, instead of proving an addition of expense, it will prove a reduction of one-third of our whole military expense during the time of their service.

I was glad to be freed from the Rohilla expedition because I was doubtful of the judgment which would have been passed upon it at home, where I see too much stress laid upon general maxims and too little attention given to the circumstances which require an exception to be made from them. Besides this, an opinion still prevails of the Vizier's great power and his treacherous designs against us, and I cannot expect that my word should be taken as a proof of their non-existence.

At such a distance what proofs can be given of such a position? The first opinion, I conceive, to have been asserted for the purpose of keeping him in a state of impotence, that a military force might always be wanted for his protection, and that the commander of that force might have the rule both of him and his country. I draw this belief from the records of former transactions with him. The humiliating concessions which we have required from him are instances of this temper and design on our part. His compliance with them are not weak proofs of the slight grounds of our allegations against him.

On the other hand, the absence of the Mahrattas, and the weak state of the Rohillas, promised an easy conquest of them; and I own that such was my idea of the Company's distress, at home, added to my knowledge of their wants abroad, that I should have been glad of any occasion to employ their forces, which saves so much of their pay and expenses.

The brigade is now on its return to Bengal.

The residence of Europeans in the districts of the Vizier is forbidden; a plan of equal duties settled with

Rajah Cheyt Sing from our provinces to Mirzapoor, which is the only mart in his or the Vizier's territories, and an exemption of duties for broad cloth, copper, and lead bought at the Company's outcry.

The Rajah is confirmed in the zemindarry of Gazypoor, &c., with all the rights of his father Bulwunt Sing, which are to continue unchanged to his posterity for ever.

As I see no use in excuses and evasions, which all the world can see through, I replied to a peremptory demand of the King for the tribute of Bengal by a peremptory declaration that not a rupee should pass through the provinces till they had recovered from the distresses to which the lavish payments made to him had principally contributed.

The Board have supported this declaration by a resolution to pay him no more till they shall receive the Company's orders for it.

You have already received my sentiments concerning the injustice of this tribute even while he remained with us. His desertion of us, and union with our enemies, leaves us without a pretence to throw away more of the Company's property upon him, especially while the claims of our own Sovereign are withheld for it. Yet he has his advocates, both here and at home, who consider this treatment of him in the most criminal light.

The Board have approved of my conduct. The General has objected to it, and all my time since the close of the despatches has been employed in defending it. I cannot abridge either his reasoning or my own.

George Vansittart has sent a copy of all the principal papers which regard these transactions to Mr. Palk, who will show them to you. I am preparing a longer work, which shall follow in the next packet, for your inspection. I am, with the truest regard and esteem, dear Sir, your faithful and obedient servant.

Such were the results of Mr. Hastings's journey to Benares, and of the personal intercourse which he held there during the space of three months with the Vizier. That they were in the highest degree beneficial to the Company's interests has never, as far as I know, been disputed. There might have been fifty years ago, there may still be, differences of opinion, touching the moral fitness of several of the arrangements into which the contracting parties entered; but as far as Mr. Hastings is concerned, one motive of action, and one only, is perceptible, namely, an ardent desire to execute the trust which the East India Company had reposed in him, by redeeming their affairs from the state of absolute dilapidation into which they had fallen. It is not, however, to be supposed, that the attention of this great man was exclusively devoted all the while to the adjustment of the Benares treaty. The management of that treaty seems, on the contrary, to have been but so much additional labour imposed upon him; for his letters written while it hung in the balance are innumerable; nor is there any conceivable topic, such as one in his position might be expected to discuss, to which they do not relate. I find him, for example, writing to his colleagues in council concerning questions of revenue, of civil and commercial law, of military arrangements, and of commerce. I see notes addressed to collectors

and other detached functionaries, in which the rights of zemindars and talookdars are explained. He watches over the safety of the public roads; he devises new routes for the transmission of the post; he corresponds on these heads with Major Rennel, the illustrious geographer, and communicates even to him valuable information. When differences arise between individuals, he comes forward as umpire in the quarrel; he advises, cautions, rebukes, and, where it is necessary, restrains. There is no point, in short, so minute that he seems to have passed it by, nor any so important that he shrank from grappling with it. And throughout the whole, one principle, and one only, seems to have actuated him. He never loses sight of the interests of his employers, as far as these are compatible with the just claims of the native population; he is forgetful only of himself. Moreover, the temper, the discretion, the forbearance which his letters display, are beyond all praise. Take, for example, his mode of dealing with Sir Robert Barker, a well-intentioned man, no doubt, but bigoted to his own opinions, and no wise forgetful of his own interests. This gentleman had already taken offence, because Mr. Hastings, like a wise man, substituted at the court of the Vizier his own representative for a military officer, the mere agent of the commander-in-chief. He was doubly offended because, in conferring with the Vizier at

Benares, Mr. Hastings had not permitted him to be present at all the interviews. Accordingly he wrote to Mr. Hastings in terms which would have called forth from almost any other man an angry reply, and received in return the following mild remonstrance.

To Sir ROBERT BARKER.

Benares, 2d September, 1773.

Dear Sir,—The reproaches contained in your letter are so unexpected, that I scarce know how to reply to them, as I cannot recollect a single circumstance in my conduct, since my arrival at this place, which can justify them.

Before I entered on my conference with the Vizier, I showed you my instructions, I desired your opinion upon them, I requested your advice concerning my proceedings, and had a long conversation with you on every subject which occurred to me relative both to the business of my commission and our mutual objects. At the same time I frankly declared to you that one object of my commission, as well as of my own particular wishes, was to establish a more immediate communication between the administration and the Vizier than had hitherto taken place, and as the responsibility of affairs rested more on myself than on any other member of our Government, to impress him with a due sense of the authority which I held as the head of it; that I consider the second place as due to you, and should as well in justice to yourself, as in consideration of my own credit, which must be involved in the success of your operations, use every means in my power to support your authority, and add to your influence. I can solemnly affirm that I spoke with sincerity, and that I have in everything which I have done

which could any way affect your credit, acted to the best of my knowledge in strict conformity to those declarations. I have related to you all that has passed between the Vizier and myself; I desired him to talk with you upon the same subjects; I received his proposal for your remaining in the command with the readiest acquiescence, assuring him, (as I have since done yourself,) that I know no one whom I should be so well pleased to have conduct of the measures which might be agreed on, and that he had prevented my making the same proposal to himself.

With respect to the subject of my negociations, I have since informed you of the progress which I had made in them, and received your opinion which I have also made use of upon them.

With respect to the inattention which you charge me with having paid you in my conferences with the Nabob, I will candidly own that it was my declared purpose, before I accepted of this commission, to transact every point with the Vizier in person, and without any participation or assistance. I should have declined the trust, had it been thought necessary to join any one with me in it, because neither could the Vizier have imparted his mind with the same confidence to me in the presence of others, or even of a third person only, nor could I hope for despatch, where I was to take the opinion of others on every new point which might arise in the course of our conversation. The Board unanimously adopted, if they did not first express, these sentiments, and I was appointed their sole agent in the business which I had undertaken.

I should be sorry if the other gentlemen of the Board who are with me should take the like exceptions to my behaviour. I have been as explicit in all matters to you as to them, and if a more frequent communication has not taken place between you and me, it

has been solely owing to the distance of your quarters from mine, which I have much regretted, as it has constantly prevented my benefiting so much as I should have wished by your assistance.

If in personal attention you think I have been wanting, I beg you will accept of this assurance, that it has not been intentional, as my time has been wholly engrossed by business.

It is scarce worth mentioning but to obviate what may possibly have been misrepresented to you, that Mr. Lawrell once, and Mr. Vansittart twice, were present while I was conversing with the Nabob on business, and each time by accident only, every other meeting having been between the Vizier and myself, with no one present but his confidant Mahmud Ellich Cawn.

The preparatory conferences ended, it was my intention to have requested both your presence and that of the other gentlemen of the Council, who are here, to form and draw up the articles to be agreed to. Your last letter has made it an awkward circumstance for me now to mention my wish in this particular. Had it arrived a few minutes later, I should have written to you to request that favour this evening, as I was that instant going to do.

I expect the other gentlemen to be with me for that purpose, and if it should not be inconvenient to you, I hope no misunderstanding will disappoint me of the hopes which I have of seeing you also.

You promised some days past to assist me with a calculation of the separate expense of a battalion of Europeans, a battalion of Sepoys, and a couple of guns. Allow me to remind you of it, as it will be very necessary to be inserted in the articles. I am, with esteem, dear Sir, your most obedient servant.

The following admirable letter, though a public

despatch, must on no account be omitted. It places in a conspicuous point of view the writer's opinions respecting the extent of powers with which the Governor-General ought to have been entrusted, and therefore contrasts strongly with proceedings which I shall by and bye be required to notice. I add to it, likewise, a private communication on the same subject, and close with it the correspondence of the year.

To the Honourable the Court of Directors for the Affairs of the Honourable United Company of Merchants of England trading to the Indies.

Fort William, 11th November, 1773.

Honourable Sirs,—I have been duly honoured with your letter of the 16th April by the Harcourt, and duplicate of the same by the Egmont.

I am at a loss for words to convey the sense which I entertain of the honourable terms in which you have been pleased to express your approbation of my services. While my gratitude is excited by these instances of your kindness, I feel my zeal encouraged by the assurances which you have been pleased to afford me of your continued protection. My best expression of thanks for both must be made by my future conduct, which (if I know my own heart) will never be drawn by any bias, however powerful, from the pursuit of your interests, nor do I wish or aspire to any reward superior to your applause.

While I indulge the pleasure which I receive from the past success of my endeavours, I own I cannot refrain from looking back with a mixture of anxiety on the omissions by which I am sensible I may since have hazarded the diminution of your esteem. All my letters addressed to your honourable Court, and to the

select committee, repeat the strongest promises of prosecuting the inquiries into the conduct of your servants, which you had been pleased to commit particularly to my charge. You will readily believe that I must have been sincere in those declarations, since it would have argued great indiscretion to have made them, had I foreseen my inability to perform them. I find myself now under the disagreeable necessity of avowing that inability; at the same time that I will boldly take upon me to affirm that on whomsoever you might have delegated that charge, and by whatever powers it might have been accompanied, it would have been sufficient to occupy the entire attention of those who were entrusted with it, and even with all the aids of leisure and authority would have proved ineffectual. I dare appeal to the public records, to the testimony of those who have opportunities of knowing me, and even to the detail which the public voice can report of the past acts of this government, that my time has been neither idly nor uselessly employed. Yet such are the cares and embarrassments of this various state, that although much may be done, much more, even in matters of moment, must necessarily remain neglected. To select from the miscellaneous heap which each day's exigencies present to our choice those points on which the general welfare of your affairs most essentially depends, to provide expedients for future advantages, and guard against probable evils, are all that your administration can faithfully promise to perform for your service with their united labours most diligently exerted. They cannot look back, without sacrificing the objects of their immediate duty, which are those of your interests, to endless researches which can produce no real good, and may expose your affairs to all the ruinous consequences of personal malevolence both here and at home.

May I be permitted, in all deference and submission to your commands, to offer it as my opinion, that whatever may have been the conduct of individuals, or even of the collective members of your former administrations, the blame is not so much imputable to them as to the want of a principle of government adequate to its substance, and a coercive power to enforce it. The extent of Bengal, and its possible resources, are equal to those of most states in Europe. Its difficulties are greater than those of any, because it wants both an established form and powers of government, deriving its actual support from the unremitted labour and personal exertion of individuals in power instead of the vital influence which flows through the channels of a regular constitution, and imperceptibly animates every part of it. Our constitution is nowhere to be traced but in ancient charters which were framed for the jurisdiction of your trading settlements, the sales of your exports, and the provision of your annual investment. I need not observe how incompetent these must prove for the government of a great kingdom, and for the preservation of its riches from private violence and embezzlement.

Among your servants, who for a course of years have been left at large in possession of so tempting a deposit, it is not to be wondered at that many have applied it to the advancement of their own fortunes, or that those who were possessed of abilities to introduce a system of better order, should have been drawn along by the general current, since few men are inspired with so large a share of public virtue as to sacrifice their interests, peace, and social feelings to it, and to begin the work of reformation on themselves.

I should not have presumed to expatiate on a subject of this nature, although my own justification has made it in some measure necessary, but that your

late advices have given hopes that we shall speedily be furnished with your instructions for establishing a system of law and polity which we hitherto want. Whenever this work shall be accomplished on a foundation of consistency and permanency, I will venture to foretell, from the knowledge which I have of the general habits and manners of your servants, that you will hear of as few instances of licentiousness amongst them as among the members of any community in the British empire. As this, whenever attempted, must necessarily be a work of time, I entreat your permission to submit to your consideration such defects in your present system as my experience has suggested to me, and I hope my intention will be judged with candour, although my own ambition may be gratified by the regulations which I wish to recommend.

I shall offer but two points to your notice. One is the rapid succession of your governors; the other, the undefined powers of the respective members of your administration. Both are productive of the same ill effects, a want of vigour and consistency in public measures, and a general diffidence and the consequent spirit of intrigue in those whose interests or services are by any mode of relation connected with our government.

These well-known infirmities in our constitution were frequently alluded to by the Vizier in the late conferences which I had with him at Benares. He lamented the perpetual hazard to which he was exposed of losing the English friendship by the continual changes of their chiefs, who were no sooner known to him, and a confidence established with them, than they were recalled, and others substituted in their stead; whose tempers he was to study, and whose affections he was to conciliate anew, and then to lose

them as he had lost their predecessors, and have the same fruitless labour to repeat for ever. He once asked me in plain terms what assurances I could give him that new conditions would not be required of him, or that those for which I should have pledged the faith of the Company should not be eluded by a new act of government, if six members of the Council should at any time propose an infraction of the treaty, and four only joined me in opposing it.

The powers of the governor, although supposed to be great, are in reality little more than those of any individual in his Council. Their compliance, his own abilities, or a superior share of attention, and the opinion that he possesses extraordinary powers, may give him the effect of them, and an ascendant over his associates in the administration; but a moment's contention is sufficient to discover the nakedness of his authority, and to level him with the rest. Happily I find myself sufficiently secured against such effects. The notice with which you have distinguished my services, the injunctions which you have laid on the other members of the Board to afford me their support, and the degree of responsibility which you have been pleased to attribute to my particular conduct, have contributed to strengthen my hands against any improper opposition. At the same time I must do the gentlemen of the Board the justice to declare that I have found in them so cordial a disposition to co-operate with me in every measure for the public good, that I feel no want of extraordinary powers for myself, nor, under such favourable circumstances, is it my wish to possess them. I mention this want only as a defect in the service, which is rendered still more important by the false opinion that the principal authority rests constitutionally in the hands of the president, when in effect it is merely accidental.

To draw the line between him and the other members of his administration, and to define the powers which may be entrusted to his charge, would not be an easy task. In me it may be deemed assuming; yet I conceive it to be my duty, because I am convinced that the future prosperity, and even the being of the Company, and of the national interests in this great kingdom, depend upon it. The distant and slow interposition of the supreme power which is lodged in your hands cannot apply the remedies to the disorders which may arise in your state. A principle of vigour, activity, and decision must rest somewhere. In a body of men entrusted with it, its efficacy is lost by being too much divided. It is liable to still worse consequences, the less the number is of which the body consists, because the majority is easier formed. Fixed to a single point only it can command confidence and ensure consistency. I am compelled to affirm, because I know not by what arguments to prove, what appears to me a self-evident maxim.

On the other hand there is a danger that such a power may be abused, unless powerful checks be provided to counteract the misapplication of it. These I leave to your wisdom to form, if the modification of it which I shall propose shall be found inadequate to the purpose. I will not take up more of your attention on this subject, but proceed to describe the points of distinction which appear to me necessary for ascertaining the respective provinces of the Council, the Select Committee, and the President.

1. The Select Committee shall have the power of making peace and war, and of determining all measures respecting both, independent of the Council at large. But they shall enter into no treaty of alliance, whether offensive or defensive, for a longer duration than two years without a special authority from the

honourable the Court of Directors. Every such treaty shall be communicated to the Council at large as soon as it conveniently may be, that their opinion upon it may be transmitted with it to the Court of Directors.

2. It shall nevertheless be allowable for the President to bring any matter before the Council at large, although included within the foregoing limitations, and the decision of the Council thereon shall be valid and binding on the select committee. But no other members of the committee shall be allowed the same privilege.

3. The President shall have the privilege of acting by his own separate authority on such urgent and extraordinary cases as shall in his judgment require it, notwithstanding any decision of the Council, or of the committee passed thereon. On every such occasion the President shall record his resolution to act in the manner above specified, in virtue of the power thus vested in him, and shall expressly declare that he charges himself with the whole responsibility.

4. All civil appointments within the provinces shall be made by the Board at large, but the President shall be empowered of his own authority to prevent any particular appointment, and to recal any person not being a member of the Board, from his station, even without a reason assigned. All appointments beyond the provinces, and all military appointments which are not in the regular line of promotion, shall be made by the President alone.

I shall forbear to comment on the above propositions. If just and proper, their utility will be self apparent. One clause only in the last article may require some explanation, namely, the power proposed for the governor of recalling any person from his station "without assigning a reason for it." In the charge of oppression, although supported by the cries of the people and

the most authentic representations, it is yet impossible in most cases to obtain legal proofs of it, and unless the discretionary power which I have recommended be somewhere lodged, the assurance of impunity from any formal inquiry will baffle every order of the Board, as on the other hand the fear of the consequences will restrain every man within the bounds of his duty if he knows himself liable to suffer by the effect of a single control.

I beg leave to return to the first subject herein offered to your consideration by declaring that as I have no wish in life equal to that of being useful in the sphere which has been allotted me, so it is my fixed resolution to devote my services to the Honourable Company so long as your pleasure and my health will allow me: and I offer it as my humble opinion that on whomsoever you shall think fit to bestow the place which I now hold in your service, it will be advisable to fix him in it for a long period of time. I have already mentioned the principal evils which arise from the too frequent changes of your governors. I will beg leave to add another, in which I shall need your candour to obviate any misconstructions of it to my own prejudice.

The first command of a state so extensive as that of Bengal is not without opportunities of private emoluments, and although the allowances which your bounty has liberally provided for your servants may be reasonably expected to fix the bounds of their desires, yet you will find it extremely difficult to restrain men from profiting by other means, who look upon their appointment as the measure of a day, and who, from the uncertainty of their condition, see no room for any acquisition but of wealth, since reputation and the consequence which follows the successful conduct of great affairs, are only to be attained in a course of years. Under such circumstances, however rigid your orders

may be, or however supported, I am afraid that in most instances they will produce no other fruits than either avowed disobedience or the worse extreme of falsehood and hypocrisy. These are not the principles which should rule the conduct of men whom you have constituted the guardians of your property, and checks on the morals and fidelity of others. The case of self-preservation will naturally suggest the necessity of seizing the opportunity of present power, when the duration of it is considered as limited to the usual term of three years, and of applying it to the provision of a future independency. Therefore every renewal of this term is liable to prove a reiterated oppression.

It is perhaps owing to the causes which I have described, and a proof of their existence, that this appointment has been for some years past so eagerly solicited, and so easily resigned. There are yet other inconveniences attendant on this habit, and perhaps an investigation of them all would lead to endless discoveries. Every man whom your choice has honoured with so distinguished a trust seeks to merit approbation, and acquire an eclat by innovations, for which the wild scene before him affords ample and justifiable occasion. But innovations of real use acquire a length of time, and the unremitted application of their original principles to perfect them. Their immediate effects are often hurtful, and their intended benefits remote, or virtually diffused through such concealed channels that their source is not easy to be traced. Of this nature are the late regulations in your revenue customs, and in the commerce of the country, which have been attended with an immediate loss in the collections, and in the price of your investment; and it will require a long and intricate train of reasoning to prove that the future increase of population, of national wealth, of the revenue and trade, should such be the happy effects of

these expedients, were really produced by them. But who that looks only for present applause or present credit would hazard both for remote advantages, of which another might arrogate the merit and assume the reward? Or who will labour with equal perseverance for the accomplishment of measures projected by others, as of those of which he was himself the contriver?

Although I disclaim the consideration of my own interest in these speculations, and flatter myself I proceed upon more liberal grounds, yet I am proud to avow the feelings of an honest ambition that stimulates me to aspire at the possession of my present station for years to come. Those who know my natural turn of mind will not ascribe this to sordid views. A very few years possession of the government would undoubtedly enable me to retire with a fortune amply fitted to the measure of my desires, were I to consult only my own ease: but in my present situation I feel my mind expand to something greater. I have catched the desire of applause in public life. The important transactions in which I have been engaged, and my wish to see them take complete effect, the public approbation which you have been pleased to stamp on them, and the estimation which that cannot fail to give me in the general opinion of mankind, lead me to aim at deserving more; and I wish to dedicate all my time, health, and labour to a service which has been so flattering in its commencement.

Such are my views and such my sentiments. I expose them without reserve, because I am conscious you will find nothing unworthy in them, whatever opinion you may form of their expediency.

I shall wait your determination with becoming expectation but without anxiety, nor shall I ever less esteem the favours I have already received, because

others are withheld which it may be either not expedient or impracticable to grant.

I have the, honour to be, with the greatest respect, honourable Sirs, &c.

To Laurence Sulivan, Esq.

Fort William, 18th December, 1773.

Dear Sir,—I believe I informed you by the Latham of a letter which I had written to the Court of Directors respecting the powers of this government. I enclose a copy of it for your perusal, and wish it to be confined to your perusal, to Mr. Palk's, and Sir George Colebrooke's, if you think he will have a desire to see it. I have already given him my sentiments upon the subject in a letter of March last. If you consider my propositions as reasonable, I am assured of a double support of them in your influence from motives of friendship, added to your regard for the service. Of this I am certain, that at some period not far distant, the powers which I have solicited, or greater, will be given, whether it be my lot or that of another to possess them; for it will be found impossible for a government so extensive as this is to subsist in a divided power, and that entrusted to persons whose views are so limited as those of the members of the Council have ever invariably been, and such I suppose they must necessarily continue while the present constitution lasts.

I believe I have read enough of your way of thinking to presume that my sentiments on this point do not differ materially from yours: but I must beg leave to add a very bold word in my own behalf, which is, that I do not know a man who may be more safely entrusted with extraordinary powers than myself, or who would be more likely to make a moderate use of them, as I am neither vehement in the pursuit of gain, nor apt to convert the authority which I possess to an instrument of partial favour or enmity to others. I wish to merit

reputation, and as I am happily placed in a scene in which, with the aid that I have required, I know myself capable of attaining it, I would sacrifice every consideration to so tempting an object. God forbid that the government of this fine country should continue to be a mere chair for a triennial succession of indigent adventurers to sit and hatch private fortunes in.

If I have time for other subjects by this ship, they shall form another letter. This I shall deliver to the care of Colonel Chapman, whom I recommend to your acquaintance, not as a candidate for future favours, but as a pleasing companion and a sensible, honest man. I am, with the truest esteem and gratitude, dear Sir. &c.

CHAPTER XI.

Change of Revenue System—Letters carrying on the History of his Government.

THERE is no production of human skill so perfect but that defects may here and there be discovered in it. There has never yet been created a system for the management of masses of men, which has not more or less failed to satisfy its authors. Mr. Hastings had great reason, on the whole, to congratulate himself on the results of his various experiments; yet in one, and that perhaps the most important point of all, he was doomed to disappointment. The revenue was not realized as he had anticipated, and the blame was laid, according to Mr. Hastings's view very unfairly, on the inability or disinclination of the newly appointed collectors to do their duty. Against this prejudice, had it stood alone, he might, and probably would, have borne up. He himself never appears to have doubted that the cupidity of the natives, not the remissness of the European collectors, was in fault; that the former, in their eagerness to farm portions of the revenue, bid a great deal more for their respective districts than the districts were worth; and hence that when pay-day came round, they were unable to meet the demands of the tax-

gatherer. But no opportunity was afforded him of testing the soundness of this theory; inasmuch as there arrived positive orders from the Court of Directors which he found it impossible to resist. The facts of the case were these.

So early as the 7th of April, 1773, previously to the arrival of Mr. Hastings's detail of the arrangements which he had made for the future management of the revenues, the Court of Directors had caused a long and elaborate despatch to be written, in which, after giving it as their opinion that the institution of supervisors had not answered its purpose, they went on to propound a plan of their own, and to require, in peremptory terms, that it should forthwith be carried into effect. What the nature of the plan was will be best understood by setting forth the immediate consequences of its adoption; for adopted it was, with the less hesitation on Mr. Hastings's part, that he felt his own to have proved, from some cause or other, a failure. The changes, then, which the Court's letter introduced into the fiscal machinery of the provinces were these.

1. The European collectors were recalled, and in their room were appointed native dewans or aumils, each of whom superintended a district correspondent in point of extent to that over which, as a collectorship, the Europeans had recently presided. There was, indeed, an exception made in

favour of districts which were absolutely in the hands of a particular zemindar or renter. Over such no aumil was placed; but the zemindar was considered personally accountable to the provincial council, within the limits of which his zemindarry lay. In like manner the administration of civil justice which had been entrusted to the collector was, with the management of the revenue, transferred to the aumil; from whom an appeal lay to the provincial council; and thence, under special restrictions, to the Governor in Council acting as the sudder dewanny adaulut.

2. A committee of revenue was formed at the presidency, consisting of two members of the Board and three senior servants, whose business it was to superintend and control the general revenue affairs of the country, subject only to the Superior Council. The committee had it in charge to order, from time to time, visits of inspection to such districts as might seem to require a local investigation; and to appoint to this duty not the senior servants of the Company, but such as, by the knowledge of the Persian and Hindostannee languages, and the other qualifications of temper and talent, should appear best fitted to execute the trust. All complaints of the ryots or others against the dewans, farmers, zemindars, or other public officers, were to be finally received and decided upon by this committee.

3. The better to facilitate the working of the system, the provinces were formed into six grand divisions ; the first to be managed at Calcutta, the second at Burdwan, the third at Moorshedabad, the fourth at Dinagepore, the fifth at Dacca, and the sixth at Patna. For each of these divisions a provincial council was established, to consist of a chief, four members, being senior servants, a Persian translator, an accountant, and three assistants.

Finally the councils received injunctions to institute minute inquiry into the condition of every talook, or other smaller portions of land, within the limits of their respective jurisdictions, so as to settle the proper localities and funds, to ascertain the aumil's profits on the same, and to furnish the Superior Council with such information as might enable them to adjust and arrange a complete system for the better management of the collections. It is worthy of remark, however, that all this machinery of provincial councils was never meant except for temporary purposes, because the Court's letter directed that, so soon as the accounts and arrangements at any of the divisions should be in a state to warrant the step, the control of that division should be brought down to the presidency.

Mr. Hastings, as I have already stated, did not hesitate for a moment to obey the Court's orders.

He appears, indeed, to have thought but meanly of the construction of the machine, and looked forward with some anxiety to the next that should follow. But he at once attended to his instructions, and wrote in the following terms to his friend Mr. Sulivan on the occasion.

To LAURENCE SULIVAN, Esq.

Fort William, 10th March, 1774, (per Resolution.)

Dear Sir,—I should have thought it a duty to address the Court of Directors upon the following subject, if I had not the strongest reasons to believe that any arguments which I may offer upon it will come too late, as their last advices assured us that we should be speedily furnished with complete regulations for the management of the revenue, and the reports which have reached us, however imperfect, of the changes which have been introduced into the form of this government are too circumstantial to be entirely void of foundation. I should be sorry to expose myself to the disadvantages which would attend the appearance of an elaborate discussion of a proposition long ago decided, and out of date; much less would I choose to reflect on a measure already perhaps resolved on, and past recall. I shall continue, therefore, upon this, as I have always done on other occasions, to make you the trustee of my private opinions, being convinced that, whether you are in or out of office, they will prove more useful in your hands than in any in which I could deposit them.

In consequence of the commands of the Court of Directors, in their letter of the 7th of April last, for withdrawing the collectors from the country, and substituting some other plan for the temporary management of the collections, it was determined, after many

meetings and deliberations held by the Board upon this subject, that a plan should be formed and recommended for the future, and established regulation of the revenue, at the same time that the temporary one directed by the general letter was immediately resolved on. The scheme of the first is briefly this: to collect the revenues in the districts by the agency of dewans, who shall be subject to the orders of a committee, or inferior council of revenue, resident at the Presidency, and this to the general control of the Superior Council.

I own it was with regret that I found myself compelled to leave this plan in speculation, and to join with the Board in forming a temporary arrangement, which approaches too near in its principles to the authority exercised by the collectors to render it eligible as a permanent institution. But it was unavoidable. We were precluded from making any other than a temporary plan, nor indeed would it have been advisable to have attempted the immediate execution of that which has been proposed. The Company's interests have suffered already by the many innovations which have been introduced into the administration of the revenue. The precipitancy with which these have been made has contributed no less to their ill-effects, as every habit of any standing naturally becomes rooted to the constitution, and cannot be parted from it without some danger from the convulsion. Every essential change, therefore, requires to be brought about gradually, with great tenderness, and with every possible precaution, to supply the defects occasioned by the removal of the former practice, and to apply the new forms without violence to the people, or a burthensome charge on the revenue. It is my earnest wish to bring the superintendency of the collections in their detail immediately to Calcutta; but

this must be the work of time. The irregular and loose state of most parts of the province; the multitude of small farms, and tealooks in single pergunnas, each separately responsible for its own rents; and the want of substance in almost all the farmers of the revenue, require a near and vigilant control both for the security of the people from oppression, and of the collections from embezzlement, neglect, and dissipation. In short I found that the members of the Board themselves, and especially those who have ever shown themselves most diligent and knowing in the business of the revenue, were unwilling and fearful to undertake the management of it at such a distance from the cucherries where the collections are immediately received, until the country was brought into better order.

It was therefore agreed that the provinces should be formed into six grand divisions, including the province of Bahar as one, and each be placed under the charge of a chief and council, with similar powers to those which the collectors singly possessed in the smaller districts. To prevent the abuse which might be made of this authority, the members of the Superior Council from whom the chiefs are selected, have been totally interdicted from trade, and the other members of the Provincial Councils in such articles of it as are most likely to prove oppressive or pernicious to the country. As an incitement to the chiefs and other members of the Superior Council to check any licentious exercise of the influence enjoyed by the inferior members in their private concerns, as an indemnification for their own forbearance, and a pledge for their faithful observance of it, it has been proposed that they shall be allowed each a monthly gratuity of 3000 rupees, out of a fund raised for that purpose by the profits arising from the sale of opium, which in con-

sequence of a report made by me to the Board of the state of the opium trade in the province of Bahar soon after my return to the Presidency, has been made a property of the Company. This, in effect, is only a transfer of the private emoluments formerly derived from this article of trade by the factory at Patna, from them to the members of the administration; and I venture to recommend it not only as a just recompense for the additional labour and responsibility with which the members of the Board are become charged on the present system, but as a saving measure to the Government itself.

I express with the more confidence my sentiments upon this occasion, as I conceive myself the only member of the administration who is qualified to speak disinterestedly upon it. And you will perhaps allow it as a proof of my conviction of the utility of this allowance, when you are informed that I have totally excluded myself from a participation in the benefits of it, although you may easily suppose it to have been in my power to take a more than equal proportion of the trade itself, either for my own use or that of others to whom I might have chosen to relinquish it, had it been permitted to remain on its original footing.

If the Court of Directors should disapprove of the measure, their orders may arrive in time to prevent its taking place, as no division will be made till their reply shall be received to our advices, which contain the first mention of it.

As the institution of provincial councils for the administration of the affairs of the revenue has often been talked of as a useful expedient, I am afraid it will have many advocates, both here and at home. For my own part, I esteem it as a temporary expedient, both useful and necessary, as I have declared already: but as a fixed and established regulation, I am apprehensive

that it will be attended with consequences oppressive to the inhabitants, prejudicial to the revenue, and ruinous to the trade of the country. Each division would be liable to become a separate tyranny of the most absolute kind, because from its decrees there could be no appeal but to the council of Calcutta, who (the president excepted) would be parties in every cause against the appellants, and because the people would lie too much at the mercy of their rulers to dare to lift up their voices against them. The trade of the country would be monopolised or laid under contribution, for who would hazard their property against the combined influence of private interest and uncontrolled power? The revenues would suffer by the taxes levied for private profit on the zemindars and farmers, which the reiats would be compelled to pay, and thereby become less able to pay the due rents of government. Laws would be projected for partial and insidious purposes, instead of the general good of the country, or benefit of the state, and every division would wear a different form of government, according to the different interests or caprices of those who presided over them.

I have always considered the collectors as tyrants, because the local advantages which they possessed, added to the timidity and patience of oppression which characterizes the natives of Bengal, restraining them from complaining, and the chicanery and falsehood for which they are equally notorious, discrediting every complaint which they might prefer, made it difficult for the Council to restrain them effectually, especially as the same interest by which those offices were acquired, would be always employed more or less to protect them. Yet there lay an appeal to their superiors, nor was it in the power of their patrons to defend them in cases of notorious enormity. But if,

instead of junior servants, the members of the Board are themselves to be collectors, these can be under no restraint. Their judges in all complaints against them will be composed of their equals, and expectants of the same privileges. The president, whose more especial care it will be to hear and redress the wrongs of the people, will be a common object of hatred and jealousy to the rest of the Council, because he will not participate in their common interests ; so that this system would be liable not only to the worst species of despotism in the inferior members of the government, but to cause also a total anarchy at the head.

If the plan which I have recommended of leaving the collections in the hands of the Dewans or native officers, under the control of the committee of revenue, should be judged liable to worse consequences than the confirmation of the establishment of provincial councils, I am still of opinion that the restoration of the collectors would do less mischief, for the reasons which I have already given.

There is indeed one way by which either might be kept in awe, and that is, by investing the governor with full power to remove them by his own authority. But this would raise such a spirit of opposition against all his measures that it would be necessary to arm him with still greater powers to counteract the effects of the first.

This subject is too nearly connected with my own interest for me to pursue it with freedom. I will only add that whatever system be adopted, extraordinary powers must be given to the governor to enable him to support the principles on which it is founded, and these powers must extend in an equal degree to every other part of his general authority. I am confident in asserting these positions, nor have I a doubt that at some time or other they will be reduced to practice,

although I know very few with whom I would venture to give my voice for lodging such able and tempting means to do mischief.

After all I must return to my original opinion, that the members of the Board be confined wholly and indispensably to the presidency. Nothing can so effectually strengthen the government, or secure the property of the inhabitants from violence, and the trade of the country from monopoly. But they must be allowed a compensation for the restriction, and a liberal one, such as will be binding on their integrity. They must be wholly interdicted, as they now are, from trade, and bind themselves by solemn engagements both to refrain from it themselves, and to prevent, to the utmost of their power, the oppressive dealings of others. Prohibitory laws and covenants may serve for good grounds to institute a legal process for the breach of them, but will not produce any real effect unless some advantageous concessions are made at the same time to the parties which will engage them by the principles of gratitude and honour to the faithful observance of them. This is not a maxim for the people of England, who estimate the salaries and emoluments of men in office in this country by no other standard than the rate of exchange between rupees and pounds sterling, and the comparative ranks and characters of those who fill such offices, with their countrymen in the same line at home, where they contentedly labour for the profits of the day, and live and die in the bosoms of their families and kindred. Here the administration of a rich and extensive kingdom is in the hands of a few, and the whole wealth of it at their disposal. The distance of the supreme power on which it depends, the servile habits and characters of the people, and the nature of landed property, which by the constitution is solely vested in the government, throw so vast a trust

into the hands of the members of the Council, as requires adequate profits and incitements for the just discharge of it, or, in default of such a provision, they will act as men ever do in such cases, and carve for themselves.

I am, with the warmest sentiments of gratitude and affection, dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant, &c. &c.

P.S. Since writing the above, I have had some conversation with a gentleman of considerable rank in the service, but who was not consulted in the late regulations, and I was surprised to hear him complain of the restriction which was laid upon the members of the Board as a great grievance, and the compensatory allowance of [illegible] rupees per month, as no way adequate. I add this to show the different ideas which people. entertain on this subject. I think the compensation a handsome one. The Court of Directors may possibly think it too much. I regard it as the strongest proof which could be given of the propriety of the restrictions, that the allowance is judged unequal to the profits accruing from an unlimited trade.

The following seems, on various accounts, to demand insertion. It gives an admirable sketch of the system on which Mr. Hastings's government was carried on, and of the indefatigable industry with which he devoted himself to business.

To LAURENCE SULIVAN, Esq.

Fort William, 20th March, 1774, (per Resolution.)
Duplicate (per Swallow) 25th August, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I have written a separate letter to you on one subject, to which I chose to confine it. I request you will give it your attentive perusal. I have

since extracted the greater part of it in a letter to the chairman.

The inquiry into the conduct of Mahommed Reza Cawn is closed, and referred to the Court of Directors for their judgment, which it is probable will acquit him of every charge against him. In the meantime we have released him on his giving an obligation that he will not leave the province without leave of the Board, and he has chosen Calcutta for his residence. I in my conscience acquit him of making a trade of grain in the famine; but, of the charges of embezzlement, had he been an hundred fold guilty, it would have been impossible at this distance of time to have proved it against him: I mean in the revenue. The accounts of the Nizamut were in the hands of Rajah Goordass, Nundcomar's son, whom I must suppose capable of producing the most authentic proofs, if any exist, of the Naib's misapplication of the money entrusted to him for the Nabob's use. These ten months past I have been urging the old man, his son, and the Begum, for these accounts, in person, by letter, and by the means of the resident, Mr. Middleton. They have been at length sent, and contain nothing. A charge has since followed of 262,000 rupees, said to be embezzled in the article of exchange. This was produced by Goordass. It was delivered to Mahommed Reza Cawn, and he immediately avowed the fact—i. e., that such a perquisite did formerly exist, and was the property of the treasurers, but was converted to a fund for the payment of sundry religious and gratuitous expenses of the Nabob's household, by the advice and with the concurrence of Mr. Sykes, and he has shown by an account in what manner it was disposed of.

Here the affair rests, concluded, so far as it respects Mahommed Reza Cawn, but I expect not to escape censure in my own person for having brought it to so

quiet and unimportant an issue. Whatever disappointment this may prove to the expectations of many, I have the conscious reflection of having acted with the strictest integrity, equally rejecting every proposition, both of his foes and his friends, that I could not reconcile to justice. I have taken every measure, by proclamation, protection, and personal access, to encourage evidences against him, and have given many valuable hours, and whole days, of my time to the multiplied but indefinite accounts and suggestions of Nundcomar. I presided in every examination, one only day excepted, and was myself the examiner and interpreter in each. The proceedings will show with what wretched materials I was furnished.

Huzzoosymul, to whom I was also referred for information upon the subject of the monopoly of grain, after much timid hesitation, declared he could give me none. He is as upright and conscientious a man as any I know, but he was either deceived by the clamours of the multitude, or he feared to obtain the hated character of an informer if he revealed what he knew.

Mahommed Reza Cawn has produced the attestations of above 200 persons, mostly of credit, in vindication of his conduct during the famine. His adversary has produced a similar paper of attestations against him, signed indeed by fewer names, and those little known. Neither merit the smallest consideration. No honest man in this country would have set his hand to the latter, though he believed it to be true. Few would have had the heart to refuse signing the former, although he believed it to be false. We have at length finished the regulation of our military expenses, and almost completed that of the civil The reduction in both will be great, provided we are allowed a fair and uninterrupted progress in establishing and confirming

that part of it which requires time to accomplish—that is, provided we have no new systems to form, no supernumerary servants to maintain, nor the extravagant wants of China, Fort St. George, Bombay, and Balambangan, to supply by an accumulation of our bonded debt. A great saving will be immediately made. The computed reduction of the civil expenses makes a difference of twenty-five lacs, and in the military forty. (*Vide* P.S.) But something there will run out of the former, and if we can save twenty in the latter, I shall consider it as great economy. Hitherto nothing appears in our books which can do me credit as an economist; but for this many causes are to be assigned. I have been paying the arrears of former governments. Their excesses in the collections have occasioned heavy losses in my time. The enormous and unchecked accumulation in every article of expense took its rise before I came to the government; and so universal was the evil, and so ingenious were the people in the practice of it, that though many useful regulations have been made, they have no sooner stopped the channel of one excess than it has broken out in some other. They are now all closed, and I will answer for the effect.

I forgot to add to the inheritance left me by my predecessors a debt fluctuating between a crore and a crore and a half of rupees, the interest of which formed an article of ten lacs a-year in our disbursements.

Many deductions were made by authority from home from the revenue, which have since produced a proportional increase in others, as in the customs, which amount for the last ten months, since the commencement of the new plan, to 10, 12, 893 rupees, which you will better understand from the enclosed abstract.

The following abstract of the number of ships which have entered this port in the last four years will like-

wise show the improved state of the commerce of this country, to whatever cause it may be owing.

		Vessels.		Tons
In the year 1770, arrived in the river		88*,	in all	22,475.
In the year 1771	„	101*	„	24,140.
In the year 1772	„	119*	„	26,184.
In the year 1773	„	161*	„	37,187.
		469*		109,986

It is not easy to prove that the measures of government have caused this improvement in our commerce, but this improvement is a proof that our measures have not lessened the trade of the country.

I have a pride in mentioning as one of the first and most capital savings which I can truly claim as my own, the stipulation made with the Vizier for the whole estimated expense of the forces employed for his service ; nor have I less satisfaction in the reduction of the Nabob's stipend, in the suspension of the King's tribute, and in the treaty money for Cora and Illahabad; to which I might add the money which would have been laid out in maintaining these provinces, had we not parted with them.

We have been under the disagreeable necessity of refusing to comply with the requisitions made on us by the presidencies of Fort St. George and Bombay for remittances. We have with difficulty, and a great loss in the exchange, supplied the latter with 15 lacs, which is 11½ lacs short of their demand. I hope the necessities of Bengal, and its superior importance, will be judged adequate reasons for our refusal. Neither seem to want money more than we do, nor to have more useful purposes for the application of it.

You have been already informed of the publication

* This is exclusive of small craft innumerable that take no pilots, and pay no customs.

which was issued in May or June last, forbidding the use of force in engaging the service of the weavers, whether for the Company's investment or the business of private merchants. It has been attended with no ill effect, and I fear has not been well enforced. There is such a spirit of despotism and servitude rooted in the dispositions of the people of Bengal, that it is the most difficult point that can be imagined to check the one, or prevail on the meaner orders of the people to accept of their freedom.

From a conviction of the insufficiency of the committee of commerce to manage the investment, from one cause especially, that they never met; and in order to interest the reputation and ambition of one person in the success of it, it has been resolved to commit it to the immediate care of one person, with the title of comptroller of the investment. Mr. Aldersey has been chosen for this office, a man of business and of talents particularly adapted to this department. I have the greatest hopes of success from it.

Mr. Goodwin, another member of the board, has been nominated to another control over the offices at the presidency, with a power to audit and correct the accounts, and suspend their disbursements.

The most effectual check will be in the military expenses, through the control of the commissary-general. Colonel M'Lean has unfortunately been disabled by sickness from exerting himself much to this time, and is gone to the coast for his recovery; but he appears amply qualified and equally disposed to answer the expectations which have been formed from his appointment.

Our Cooch Bahar expedition has, I hope, terminated in an advantageous and creditable manner. The Booteas have solicited peace, offering to give up the whole open country, requiring only the possession of

the woods and low lands lying at the foot of the mountains, without which they cannot subsist, and the liberty of trading duty free as formerly to Rungpore as soon as the peace should be concluded. Their proposals were received about three days ago, and orders were immediately returned to Mr. Purling to accept them. We shall have acquired a rich and valuable country; and I believe there is little hazard of our meeting with more trouble from the Booteas, who have afforded many instances of a character much more sincere, liberal, and polite than they were thought to possess till we quarrelled with them.

The Seniassies threatened us with the same disturbances at the beginning of this year as we experienced from them the last. But by being early provided to oppose them, and one or two severe checks which they received in their first attempts, we have kept the country clear of them. A party of horse which we employed in pursuit of them, has chiefly contributed to intimidate these ravagers, who seem to pay little regard to our sepoys, having so much the advantage of them in speed, on which they entirely rely for their safety. It is my intention to proceed more effectually against them by expelling them from their fixed residences which they have established in the north-eastern quarter of the province, and by making severe examples of the zemindars who have afforded them protection or assistance.

The first brigade has marched into the province of Oude on the requisition of the Vizier, for the declared purpose of invading the country of the Rohillas on the conditions before stipulated with him: but I believe it will remain inactive as a guard to his province while he is engaged in other designs, it being too late to execute the Rohilla project. The brigade will gain in its discipline by keeping the field, and its expenses

will be saved, at least the greater part of them, by the stipulated payment which he is to make for it of 210,000 rupees. As to the Vizier himself, he is busy in adding the Dooab, or the country lying between the rivers Jumna and Ganges, and lately occupied by the Mahrattas, to his dominions. He has been successful, having met with no enemy to oppose him. I have appointed for my agent at his court Mr. Nathaniel Middleton, a young man of a fine understanding, and of a disposition perfectly suited to the employment.

The Mahrattas are in a state of the greatest distraction. A confederacy is openly formed against Ragonaut Row, their Peshwa, or head, by the majority of the ministers and chiefs of that empire, headed by Shawbajee Boosla, the chief of Berar. They have seized the widow of the late Peshwa, Narain Row, who was murdered to make way for the elevation of Ragonaut Row, intending to set up the child of which she is big, if he proves a boy, as no doubt he will, to be their head. Ragonaut was before this event so far advanced towards the Carnatic, as to alarm the gentlemen of Fort St. George with the apprehension of an invasion. They had accordingly appointed a considerable force to take the field near the borders of the Carnatic, but I suppose contrary to the inclination of the Nabob, who has declared himself unable to pay the expense of it, and this was the cause of their applying to us for money. They are, however, in no danger this year, nor ever, if my suspicions are well founded, while Mahmud Alli lives. While I am upon this subject, I must add, that the brothers of Jãnnoojee are also at variance about the succession to his government. Shawbajee, the eldest, is at the head of the confederacy against Ragonaut, and his brother Mûda Jee with Ragonaut. A Vakeel from the former is now at Calcutta.

These distractions in the Mahratta state afford us a certainty of quiet in all the Company's dominions for this season at least, and I cannot help lamenting that we want a combination of the vast powers possessed by the Company to derive some advantages from these troubles.

We have had great disputes with the French on occasions too frivolous to repeat, but founded on an opposition of principles on points of the greatest importance. They assert their right to a total independency on this Government, and to include in the same freedom all their dependants, that is, whom they please. They pretend to a right to set up factories wherever they choose, and to exercise an uncontrolled authority over the weavers, and others, to whose services they have any claim, disclaiming the authority of the established courts of justice. We have desired them to be quiet, and promised to avoid on our part, as much as lay in us, to touch upon these points in dispute, till they could be decided by superior authority in Europe. I wish they were decided, for their pretensions are unreasonable and distressing, and their manner of asserting them very provoking. They have lately notified to us the dissolution of their Council, and the nomination of Mr. Chevalier to the charge of commandant for the King, and I suppose they will not be more moderate with this new relation.

I have already, I believe, informed you of the arrival of Mr. Lambert, with the first payment made by the Vizier. Another of fifteen lacs will be soon due, besides the monthly subsidy for the brigade.

Reports have reached us overland by the wings of the Brussels Gazette of high honours conferred upon me, and the appointment of my old friend, Mr. Impey, to preside over our new court of justice, with other circumstances too imperfectly related for me to judge

whether I am to rejoice or be sorry for the change. I am anxious for authentic advices, but shall continue, as I have always done, to act as if no alterations were expected. I am, dear Sir, your faithful and obliged servant.

P.S.—The savings which I have mentioned in the second page of the second sheet, as likely to be made in the military expenses, were taken from an unfinished estimate. This has been since completed, and every article which can swell its amount fully rated, and the saving computed to be made, and which, I hope, will be made by the new establishment, is 24,43,119 rupees.

It was not, however, on these grounds exclusively, nor yet in reference to the system of management generally pursued in the provinces, that the individuals at the head of the Bengal Government were at this time agitated by rumours of change. The want of an efficient machinery for the administration of justice between Europeans and natives had long been deeply felt: and Mr. Hastings, among others, had written many letters on the subject. But Mr. Hastings, like all who were best acquainted with India and its population, dreaded nothing so much as an attempt to supply this deficiency by some rude and misshapen copy from the laws, and the forms under which they are dispensed, to the lawyer-ridden people of England. Moreover, they had heard of a fresh commission as about to be sent out—a measure which was indeed proposed, but fell to the ground—while some vague rumours touching the regulating Bill

of 1773, were rife among them. It was with the view, if possible, of averting the evils that attend the introduction of a new code into an old country, that the following letter to Lord Chief Justice Mansfield was written; and I need not add that the treatise spoken of so highly is now in everybody's hands:—Halhed's Digest of Hindoo Law requires from me no word of commendation.

To Lord MANSFIELD.

Fort William, 21st March, 1774, (per Resolution.)
Duplicate (per Swallow) 25th August, 1774.

My Lord,—I feel a very sensible regret that I have not endeavoured to improve the opportunities which I possessed by an early introduction to your Lordship's acquaintance of acquiring a better right to the freedom which I now assume in this address. The great veneration which I have ever entertained for your Lordship's character, and the unimportant sphere in which, till lately, it has been my lot to act, were sufficient checks to restrain me from such an attempt, however my wishes might have impelled me to it.

I know not whether you will admit the subject of this letter to merit your attention by its importance. My only motive for introducing it to your Lordship is, that I believe it to be of that importance, as it regards the rights of a great nation in the most essential point of civil liberty, the preservation of its own laws, a subject, of which I know no person equally able to judge, or from whom I could hope for a more ready or effectual support of any proposition concerning it.

Among the various plans which have been lately formed for the improvement of the British interests in the provinces of Bengal, the necessity of establishing a new form of judicature, and giving laws to a people

who were supposed to be governed by no other principle of justice than the arbitrary wills, or uninstructed judgments, of their temporary rulers, has been frequently suggested; and this opinion I fear has obtained the greater strength from some publications of considerable merit in which it is too positively asserted that written laws are totally unknown to the Hindoos, or original inhabitants of Hindostan. From whatever cause this notion has proceeded, nothing can be more foreign from truth. They have been in possession of laws, which have continued unchanged, from the remotest antiquity. The professors of these laws, who are spread over the whole empire of Hindostan, speak the same language, which is unknown to the rest of the people, and receive public endowments and benefactions from every state and people, besides a degree of personal respect amounting almost to idolatry, in return for the benefits which are supposed to be derived from their studies. The consequence of these professors has suffered little diminution from the introduction of the Mahomedan government, which has generally left their privileges untouched, and suffered the people to remain in quiet possession of the institutes which time and religion had rendered familiar to their understandings and sacred to their affections. I presume, my Lord, if this assertion can be proved, you will not deem it necessary that I should urge any argument in defence of their right to possess those benefits under a British and Christian administration which the bigotry of the Mahomedan government has never denied them. It would be a grievance to deprive the people of the protection of their own laws, but it would be a wanton tyranny to require their obedience to others of which they are wholly ignorant, and of which they have no possible means of acquiring a knowledge.

I cannot offer a better proof of what I have before

affirmed, than by presenting you with a specimen of the laws themselves, which it will be necessary to preface with the following brief history of the manner in which it came into my hands.

A short time after my appointment to the government of this presidency, the Company were pleased to direct the administration here to take possession of the Dewanny, or territorial government of these provinces, in their name, without using any longer the intervention of an officer of the ancient Mogul government under the title of their Naib, or deputy, and gave them full powers to constitute such regulations for the collection and management of the revenue as they should judge most beneficial to the Company and the inhabitants.

In the execution of this commission, it was discovered that the due administration of justice had so intimate a connexion with the revenue, that in the system which was adopted, this formed a very considerable part. Two courts were appointed for every district, one for the trial of crimes and offences, and the other to decide causes of property. The first consisted entirely of Mahomedans, and the latter of the principal officers of the revenue, assisted by the judges of the criminal courts, and by the most learned pundits (or professors of the Hindoo law), in cases which depended on the peculiar usages or institutions of either faith. These courts were made dependent on two supreme courts which were established in the city of Calcutta, one for ultimate reference in capital cases, the other for appeals.

In this establishment no essential change was made in the ancient constitution of the province. It was only brought back to its original principles, and the line prescribed for the jurisdiction of each Court, which the looseness of the Mogul government for some years past had suffered to encroach upon each other.

It would swell this letter to too great a bulk were

I to enter into a more minute description, although I feel the necessity of making it more comprehensive to convey an adequate idea of the subject.

As it has never been the practice of this country for the pundits or expounders of the Hindoo law, to sit as judges of it, but only to give their opinions in such cases as might be proposed to them, and as these perpetually occurring occasioned very great delays in our proceedings, or were decided at once by the officers of the Courts, without any reference, it was judged advisable for the sake of giving confidence to the people, and of enabling the Courts to decide with certainty and despatch, to form a compilation of the Hindoo laws with the best authority which could be obtained; and for that purpose ten of the most learned pundits were invited to Calcutta from different parts of the province, who cheerfully undertook this work, have incessantly laboured in the prosecution of it, and have already, as they assure me, completed it, all but the revisal and correction of it.

This code they have written in their own language, the Shanscrit. A translation of it is begun under the inspection of one of their body into the Persian language, and from that into English. The two first chapters I have now the honour to present to your Lordship with this, as a proof that the inhabitants of this land are not in the savage state in which they have been unfairly represented, and as a specimen of the principles which constitute the rights of property among them.

Although the second chapter has been translated with a despatch that has not allowed time for rendering it quite so correct as I could wish to offer it to your Lordship's view, yet I can venture to vouch for the fidelity with which it is generally executed, such parts of it as I have compared with the Persian copy having been found literally exact.

Your Lordship will find a great mixture of the superstitions of their religion in this composition. Many passages in the first chapter are not to be reconciled to any rule known to us, but may be supposed to be perfectly consonant to their own maxims, as your Lordship will perceive that they have been scrupulously exact in marking such cases as have received a different decision in the different originals from which this abstract is selected.

Upon the merit of the work itself I will not presume to offer an opinion. I think it necessary to obviate any misconception which you may entertain from the similitude in the arrangement and style to our own productions, by saying that I am assured they are close and genuine transcripts from the original.

With respect to the Mahometan law, which is the guide at least of one fourth of the natives of this province, your Lordship need not be told that this is as comprehensive, and as well defined, as that of most states in Europe, having been formed at a time in which the Arabians were in possession of all the real learning which existed in the western parts of this continent. The book which bears the greatest authority among them in India is a digest formed by the command of the Emperor Aurungzebe, and consists of four large folio volumes which are equal to near twelve of ours.

I have only to add that the design of this letter is to give your Lordship a fair representation of a fact of which the world has been misinformed, to the great injury of this country, and to prevent the ill effects which such an error may produce in a public attempt to deprive it of the most sacred and valuable of its rights. Even the most injudicious or most fanciful customs which ignorance or superstition may have introduced among them, are perhaps preferable to any which could be substituted in their room. They are

interwoven with their religion, and are therefore revered as of the highest authority. They are the conditions on which they hold their place in society, they think them equitable, and therefore it is no hardship to exact their obedience to them. I am persuaded they would consider the attempt to free them from the effects of such a power as a severe hardship. But I find myself exceeding the bounds which my deference for your Lordship's great wisdom had prescribed, and therefore quit the subject.

I know the value of your Lordship's time, and reluctantly lay claim to so great a share of it as may be required for the perusal of this letter. I assure myself that you will approve my intention. My only apprehension is, that it may arrive too late to produce the effect which I hope to obtain from it. I would flatter myself that the work which it introduces may be of use in your Lordship's hands towards the legal accomplishment of a new system which shall found the authority of the British government in Bengal on its ancient laws, and serve to point out the way to rule this people with ease and moderation according to their own ideas, manners, and prejudices. But although I should be disappointed in this expectation, I still please myself with the persuasion that your Lordship will receive it with satisfaction as an object of literary curiosity, whatever claim it may have to your attention from its intrinsic merit; as it contains the genuine sentiments of a remote and ancient people at a period of time in which it was impossible for them to have had the smallest connexion or communication with the inhabitants of Europe, on a subject in which all mankind have a common interest, and is, I believe, the first production of the kind hitherto made known amongst us.—I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant.

CHAPTER XII.

Minor details in Mr. Hastings's Government—Regulations concerning Native Marriages—Asylum offered to the Vizier's family—Mission to the Tershoo Lama—Rohilla War.

THUS far we have followed in an unbroken course the great stream of Mr. Hastings's administration, every measure connected with which bears upon its face the stamp both of an expansive intellect and a solid discretion. Mr. Hastings found the provinces, when he assumed the principal direction of their affairs, labouring under the accumulated evils of an exhausted treasury, and a government destitute of influence. The revenues, collected nobody could tell how, proved year by year less productive. There were no tribunals to which men might appeal against the oppressions of the strong, or the chicanery of the feeble. Bands of robbers wandered over the face of the country, setting the resistance of a wretched police at defiance; while poverty and sickness, the results of a terrible famine, appeared to paralyze the exertions of the scanty population that remained. With respect again to the commerce of the country, whether we look to its foreign or its domestic trade, that was totally destroyed; and partly through the misconduct of

individuals, partly through the indifference of those at the head of departments, the native merchant was thrust absolutely aside, while the Company's investments fell to nothing, as much through the poverty of the weavers and contractors from whom they were obtained, as through the negligence of the board whose business it was to watch over them. Within the limited space of two years, Mr. Hastings entirely reversed this picture. From the outrages of Decoits, and Seniassies, and other marauders, the provinces were gradually delivered. He hunted them down wherever they showed themselves, and in the end they ceased to be troublesome. The revenue system, if not perfect, was the best which circumstances would allow him to form; for the five years' settlement could be regarded only as an experiment. The establishment of district courts for the administration of justice, likewise, and of district officers to maintain the public peace, were great steps taken towards better things. So also his division of the Supreme Council into committees, and his substitution of individual superintendents for boards which never acted, equally contributed to set the machine in motion, and to render its movements certain and regular. And when we take into account that all this was done, often at the expense of private interests, oftener still in despite of old and deep-rooted prejudices, it seems impossible to deny to him who accomplished it, the

high praise of rare talent and industry such as no amount of labour could break down.

Mr. Hastings accomplished all this—not by violence, for his powers were limited; but by practising towards those with whom it was appointed him to act the utmost degree of forbearance and conciliation. In some loose memoranda which he appears to have drawn up with an undigested view of becoming his own biographer, I find, for example, this sentence: "I had the members of the Council to conciliate all the while, and for this was sometimes obliged to make sacrifices which my mature judgment disapproved." Doubtless this is true, nevertheless justice requires me to add that the members of Council more than once yielded their judgments to his; and that too upon points of no common difficulty. Among such I may particularize their acquiescence in his plan of erecting for the Company a monopoly in the trade, first of opium, and by and bye of salt. Of the condition of the opium trade under former governments, some notice has been taken elsewhere. Originally appropriated by the native princes, it became, during Clive's administration, a perquisite of the Governor and Council; from whom it passed, by order of the Court of Directors, into other hands; and finally was thrown open to general competition. In violation of the maxims of political economists, however, it began immediately to dete-

riorate, and in a short time it ceased to be either profitable to individuals, or a source of the smallest revenue to the government. Mr. Hastings felt that, if properly managed, the trade would revive. He urged his colleagues to assume the care of it in the name of their employers; and offered to take upon himself the entire responsibility of the measure. With great difficulty he prevailed; and farming out to contractors the opium districts, he realised, under extraordinary disadvantages, a revenue which, continuing year by year to increase, became in the end one of the most profitable sources of gain to the Company.

Of this, as well as of his foreign alliances, Mr. Hastings was justly proud. They were measures not less advantageous to the East India Company than they were creditable to their author. Yet there was another, of which in the memoranda just referred to he speaks with still higher exultation; and as I am sure that his reasons for so doing were excellent, I shall give them in his own words: "Of my foreign policy I had no cause to be ashamed, but that on which I chiefly congratulate myself is the abrogation of laws and usages oppressive to the people, and of one most destructive to population, which, though requiring little more than the stroke of a pen to remove it, I particularly mention, because though little known, and perhaps forgotten, it is one to which my mind ever recurs with self-

satisfaction—the abolition of the duties and fee on marriage." Now this, though it may appear trifling in the eyes of persons unaccustomed to look at things, except as they are coloured by the state of society in England, was no trivial boon to an Asiatic population, where the Scriptural axiom still holds good, and men's strength and wealth are to be calculated according to the number and healthiness of their children. Mr. Hastings was, therefore, justified in regarding himself as a serious benefactor to the people of India, by removing out of the way an obstacle to marriage, which operated injuriously in exact proportion to the degree of advantage which fruitful marriages never fail of bringing to those who from their poverty stand most in need of them.

It was at this stage in his public life that two events befel which led, indeed, to no important results, but which, because they bear testimony to the far-sightedness of the man as well as to the degree of confidence which others were inclined to repose in him, seem to demand that they should not be passed by unnoticed. The Abdallies, a powerful and warlike tribe from the north, threatened to invade Hindostan, and the Nabob Shujah Dowlah stood in great dread of the visitation. In the valour of his own troops he seems to have had little confidence; indeed he despaired entirely of the safety of his kingdom, and applied to Mr.

Hastings for some place of shelter within the limits of the British territories, where his own women, and those belonging to the principal families at Fezabad and Lucknow, might find an asylum. "To this," says Mr. Hastings, "I most gladly agreed, as a measure highly honourable in itself to our government, and likely to add to the population of the provinces, as well indirectly as directly. For besides that the principals would bring with them a large number of retainers and attendants, multitudes of artisans would be sure to follow; and the example thus set would act as an encouragement to future migrations." The Abdallies did not come, neither was the migration carried out, very much to Mr. Hastings's disappointment, who closes his brief account of the affair with these words: "The Nabob's death, and the miserable events which began in 1774, rendered this plan abortive."

The other circumstance arose out of the war in which the province of Bengal was engaged with the Rajah of Bootan, and of which mention was made in another part of this narrative. The Rajah of Bootan, it will be recollected, had taken forcible possession of the district of Cooch Bahar, and a detachment of troops was sent to dispossess him. The Rajah could make no head against the forces of the East India Company; whereupon Tershoo Lama, one of the spiritual rulers or hierarchy of Thibet, the second, indeed, in point of rank,

though acting as first on account of the minority of Delai Lama, his superior, proposed himself as a mediator between the contending parties. His mediation was readily accepted, and at his intercession peace was granted to the Rajah, on his withdrawing from the country which he had invaded, and engaging thenceforth to keep within the limits of his own. But Mr. Hastings did not stop there. With the eye of a great statesman he saw that an opportunity was afforded, certainly for exploring the countries of Bootan, Thibet, and Cashmere, possibly for opening through them a direct communication with China itself. He resolved not to neglect it; and in return for certain civilities offered to himself by the Lama, he commissioned Mr. William Bogle, a gentleman in whom he reposed great confidence, to proceed to Tapishudden, and there to act according to the tenor of the instructions with which he was entrusted. I do not know that I should be justified were I to give of this mission a detailed or particular account, because, though the undertaking was a very bold one, and the object sought to be attained of unspeakable importance, and the prospects of attaining it at one period as bright as the most sanguine imagination could have conceived, the whole scheme fell eventually to the ground. Still the omission on my part would be quite inexcusable were I to pass the matter by un-

noticed, for there is surely no criterion more unfair by which to try the merits of great undertakings than that of success or failure.

The facts of the case, then, were in few words these: On the 13th of May, 1774, Mr. Hastings, having well matured his plans, gave to Mr. Bogle a letter of instructions, from which I copy the following extracts :—

Having appointed you my deputy to the Tershoo Lama, the sovereign of Bootan, I desire you will proceed to Lahassa, his capital, and deliver to him the letter and presents which I have given you in charge. The design of your mission is to open a mutual and equal communication of trade between the inhabitants of Bootan and Bengal; and you will be guided by your own judgment in using such means of negociation as may be most likely to effect this purpose. You will take with you samples, for a trial, of such articles of commerce as may be sent from this country, according to the accompanying lists, marking as accurately as possible the charges of transporting them. You will inquire what other commodities may be successfully employed in that trade; and you will diligently inform yourself of the manufactures, productions, and goods introduced by the intercourse with other countries, which are to be procured in Bootan; especially such as are of great value and easy transportation—such as gold, silver, precious stones, musk, &c.

In this strain the letter went on to enumerate the various objects which the mission was designed to effect, considered merely as an affair between two states which had heretofore been strangers to

one another; but there accompanied it a second and a private letter much more deserving of attention. I am sure that the reader will not blame me for transcribing the latter document at length. Both in matter and in style it is singularly characteristic of the mind which dictated and the hand that wrote. It is numbered into paragraphs, and runs thus:—

1. To send me one or more pairs of animals called foos, which produce the shawl wool. If by a dooly, cage, or any other contrivance, they can be secured from the fatigue and hazard of the way, the expense is to be no objection.

2. To send one or more pairs of cattle which bear what are called cow tails.

3. To send me, carefully packed, some fresh ripe walnuts for seed, or an entire plant, if it can be transported; and any other curious or valuable seeds or plants, the rhubarb and ginseng especially.

4. Any curiosities, whether natural productions, manufactures, paintings, or what else may be acceptable to persons of taste in England. Animals only that may be useful.

5. In your inquiries concerning the people, the form of their government and the mode of collecting their revenues, are points principally meriting your attention.

6. To keep a diary, inserting whatever passes before your observation which shall be characteristic of the people, their manners, customs, buildings, cookery, the country, the climate, or the road, carrying with you a pencil and a pocket-book, for the purpose of minuting short notes of every fact or remark as it occurs, and putting them in order at your leisure, while they are fresh in your memory.

7. To inquire what countries lie between Lahassa and Siberia, and what communication there is between them. The same with regard to China and Cashmere.

8. To ascertain the value of their trade with Bengal by their gold and silver coins, and to send me samples of both.

9. Every nation excells others in some particular art or science. To find out this excellence of the Bootans.

10. To inform yourself of the course and navigation of the Burramputra, and of the state of the countries through which it runs.

It will be seen from this document that Mr. Bogle was about to penetrate into regions concerning the state and condition of which our countrymen at that time knew nothing; and that from this general ignorance Mr. Hastings himself was not free. He did not even know that the Lama was not a sovereign prince, but a priest, whose influence was well nigh as great at Pekin as in the capital of Bootan. As the embassy went forward, however, fresh light continually broke in upon him, and he became only the more desirous that it should be increased. Mr. Bogle, for example, was stopped at one of the frontier towns of Bootan, and his personal safety in some measure compromised. He persevered, however, Mr. Hastings zealously supporting him, and reached at last Tapishudden, where a further delay became necessary. I cannot better explain the nature of Mr. Hastings's views and feelings at this juncture

than by transcribing two of the private letters which he wrote to his friend.

Fort William, 10th August, 1774.

Dear Bogle,—Your letters have relieved me from a state of great anxiety. I shall be happy to learn that you are allowed to proceed, but entertain small hopes of it. If it is true that you cannot pass without an order from the Emperor of China, perhaps you might still be allowed to leave some persons with the Rajah till such a licence could be obtained. Or I should be well pleased to obtain a footing even at Tassuddea and make that a central point of communication with Lahassa. The Rajah would find his account in it. Having engaged in this business, I do not like to give it up. We should both acquire reputation from its success. The well-judging world will be ready to class it with other wild and ill-concerted projects if it fail. Make what promises or engagements you please with your Rajah; I will ratify them. Leave no means untried, but hazard neither your person nor your health by an obstinate perseverance. If you cannot proceed, return; but, if you can, leave some one for one of the purposes which I have above recommended. Do not return without something to show where you have been, though it be but a contraband walnut, a pilfered slip of sweet briar, or the seeds of a bulte or turnip, taken in payment for the potatoes you have given them gratis.

In the same spirit is the following, dated 8th September, 1774.

Dear Bogle,—I have just received yours of the 20th ultimo, and read in it with infinite pleasure that you had surmounted all your difficulties, and were preparing to proceed to Lahassa. I feel myself more in-

terested in the success of your mission than in reason perhaps I ought to be; but there are thousands of men in England whose good-will is worth seeking, and who will listen to the story of such enterprises in search of knowledge with ten times more avidity than they would read accounts that brought crores to the national credit, or descriptions of victories that slaughtered thousands of the national enemies. Go on and prosper, Your journal has travelled as much as you, and is confessed to contain more matter than Hawkesworth's three volumes. Remember that everything you see is of importance. I have found out a better road to Lahassa, by the way of Deggerchen and Coolhee. If I can find it I will send it to you.

Be not an economist if you can bring home splendid vouchers of the land which you have visited.

The superior council and judges are not yet come; I expect them about November. You shall not suffer by your absence; I am your vakeel, and will take care to seize every occasion for your advantage. Your fellow-traveller has my good wishes, and God bless you.

Mr. Bogle, as the event proved, had somewhat over-coloured his own prospects when describing to Mr. Hastings the kindness which was shown him at Tapishudden. He never succeeded in penetrating beyond that point. Yet such was the good impression made by his politic and gentle bearing upon the people in general, and in particular on Tershoo Lama, that the latter wrote to Pekin in very high terms both of the English nation and of their representative. The consequence was, that two years subsequently, the

Lama was sent for by the Emperor, on which occasion he solicited and obtained from his master leave for the Bengal government to communicate by letter directly with Pekin. There is no calculating the amount of benefit which might have accrued from this arrangement, had circumstances enabled Mr. Hastings to act upon it. Once establish a friendly intercourse between our settlements at Canton and the Imperial Courts, are from the oppressions exercised by the inferior authorities the British merchants would be delivered. Unfortunately, however, Tershoo Lama died ere the first step had been taken towards the attainment of so important an end, and there was no one left of sufficient liberality as well as weight to work out the scheme which he had devised. For though Mr. Hastings at a subsequent period sent another agent, Mr. Turner, to compliment the new Lama and solicit his friendship, the latter was still too young to act for himself; and the whole device falling to the ground, was never afterwards resumed.

Meanwhile the issues of Mr. Hastings's negociation with Shujah Dowlah were beginning to develope themselves in a manner which was not altogether satisfactory to the author of the treaty. From the first Mr. Hastings seems to have regarded a war with the Rohillas as probable; yet he imagined that it would not occur, at least for a

season ; and he founded his hopes, for to such they amounted, on the knowledge which he possessed of the Nabob's disinclination seriously to increase the amount of pecuniary obligations under which he already lay. A good deal to his surprise, therefore, and somewhat to his mortification, it was formally announced to him that so soon as the rains should have ceased in the spring of 1774, the Nabob intended to take the field, and that he should expect to be accompanied in the invasion of Rohilcund by the brigade of troops which then occupied Allahabad. There was no shrinking from this decision, because the faith of the government stood pledged to support it. Mr. Hastings therefore brought the question formally before the Council, and after a long discussion it was agreed that the brigade in question should co-operate with the Nabob's forces, the Nabob becoming bound for the pay and subsistence of the troops during the war, as well as for a gratuity to the Company of forty lacs of rupees so soon as it should have been successfully terminated.

With the details of the military operations that followed I have in this place no concern. For these Colonel Champion and the Nabob Vizier were alone responsible. Indeed, the absurdity of endeavouring to couple them, either for good or for evil, with the name of the Governor of Bengal is so palpable, that it seems difficult to conceive

how the spirit of party itself could have led men by any reasoning to be guilty of it. At the same time, I must, as Mr. Hastings's biographer, protest against the notion that, either directly or indirectly, by positive sanction or wilful connivance, he gave the smallest countenance to proceedings which savoured, in ever so light a degree, of unnecessary cruelty. He could not, indeed, himself dictate to the Nabob, nor permit the commander of the Company's troops to dictate, how the war was to be carried on. He was the ally, not the master, of the Vizier; but here served to himself the right of exercising a moral influence throughout, and that right he freely exercised. The following letters to Colonel Champion will show that, wherever the Nabob transgressed the bounds of moderation towards his enemy, he did so in despite of Mr. Hastings's well known wishes; and that if blame attached anywhere, it lay with Colonel Champion himself, who either abstained from interfering altogether or interfered injudiciously.

16th May, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I received a letter this morning from the Vizier, informing me of a complete victory gained by the troops under your command over Hafez Ramit. I cannot wait for your confirmation of the news to express to you my satisfaction with so fortunate a beginning, which, I hope, will decide the issue of the remainder of the campaign. I am happy with the prospect it affords of future success; and allow me, my

good friend, to say that I feel an equal pleasure in the opportunity which has been afforded you of displaying your abilities and acquiring an importance, at a period when your merits appear to have been so much neglected at home. It is from the fulness of my heart I declare to you that none of your warmest friends will rejoice more at every accession to your reputation, or would more readily contribute to furnish you the means of it. On this occasion I cannot omit to take notice of the sensible and humane counsel which you gave to the Vizier on the orders issued by him for laying waste the Rohilla country, a measure which would have reflected equal dishonour on our arms and reproach on his authority had it been continued. You wisely judged, that to effect the conquest of the country it was almost as necessary to conciliate the minds of the people as to defeat the actual rulers.

To Colonel CHAMPION.

Fort William, 21st May, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I am now to acknowledge the receipt of your several letters, dated the 17th, 19th, 22nd, 23rd, 26th, and two of the 28th April, and your last, dated the 2nd instant. To some parts of several of these letters I have already replied, and I am now to take up such subjects, both of these and some of your former letters, as yet remain unanswered.

With respect to supplies of provisions for our troops cantoned in the Rohilla country, this is a subject of much importance, and what you must endeavour to adjust with the Vizier in such manner, if possible, as to prevent any disappointment. The country of which you have put him in possession appears amply qualified to furnish all the supplies that can be wanted, and I think you should yourself point out the measures requisite for this purpose. In case you should find him dilatory or averse to such measures as you deem neces-

sary, you must be under the necessity of securing yourself, and you will acquaint the Vizier that he must stand to the consequences which such a necessity may occasion. In short, it is impossible to give positive directions at this distance; it will rest with you upon the spot to determine what measures to pursue, but my opinion is that the Vizier will not fail you in this article, which I found upon the experience of your own brigade when it was cantoned one season in his country.

Hitherto every part of your conduct has met with my most entire approbation. But there is one subject which in some measure alarms me; the very idea of prize-money suggests to my remembrance the former disorders which arose in our army from this source, and had almost proved fatal to it. Of this circumstance you must be sufficiently apprized, and of the necessity for discouraging every expectation of this kind among the troops. It is to be avoided like poison. However, in case any considerable capture should attend your future operations, I think you cannot pursue a better conduct than that which you intended, to determine nothing yourself, but acquaint the Board with the circumstances and wait for their decision.

I repeat my congratulations to you on the consequences of your victory, which has completely reduced the Rohilla country and fully accomplished the service proposed by the administration in their adoption of this enterprise. Zabita Cawn, being personally secured by the Vizier, I consider his country as equally subdued with the rest of the Rohilla dominion, and I think you should advise the Vizier to lose no time in sending a part of his army to secure the possession of it, that the whole of his new dominions may be in a settled situation and in a condition to repel the Mahrattas, if they should think of making any attack upon it in the beginning of the next season, which the confusion of

an unadjusted country might entice them to attempt. If he take the proper measures for settling and possessing himself entirely of his new dominions, they will be as secure as his hereditary possessions from the attacks of the Mahrattas. By the last advices I have received from Poona, there is, indeed, very little cause of apprehension from the Mahrattas, who appear to be in such a state of intestine division as will, in all probability, disqualify them for some time from extending their views to foreign operations. I am, with esteem, dear Sir, &c.

The following relates, in part at least, to an actor in certain transactions of which I have taken no notice, because, bearing in no degree upon the personal or public history of Mr. Hastings, they would lead me, if taken up at all, into a labyrinth of Indian intrigue and Indian warfare, from following which the reader would derive neither amusement nor profit. I content myself, therefore, with stating that Nijeff, or Nujeff Cawn, was a Rohilla chief, of great talents and singular moderation; that he had assisted Shah Allum with his troops and with his counsel when that ill-fated monarch made a last effort to deliver himself from the bondage of his Mahratta connexion; that, unable to oppose the strength of the enemy, Nujeff Cawn was stripped of his dominions, to which, after their own intestine quarrels removed the Mahrattas from Delhi, the King had restored him. Moreover the King, the better to evince his sense both of the

sufferings and the services of Nujeff, had created him general in chief of all his forces, and sent him now to negociate with the leader of the British brigade for, at least, a share in the territory which the Vizier had conquered. It will be seen from the tone of Mr. Hastings's letters that he entertained no idea of building up the power of the King at the expense of his own plighted faith, or the interests of the Nabob of Oude, his ally; and for the rest Mr. Hastings shall tell his own story. Colonel Champion clearly forgot where the line of his duty ran, and it became the business of the head of the government under which he acted to remind him of it. Hafez Ramit, to whom allusion is made, was the last of the Rohilla chiefs who submitted; had Colonel Champion's plan been followed up, there would have been an end to all confidence between the English and the Vizier.

To Colonel CHAMPION.

Fort William, 22d May, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I have received your favour of the 5th, which mentions the approach of Nejifcawn, near Bisooly. I can hardly suppose that he is come with any design, in concert with the Vizier, which may be adverse to you; but your first interview with him will, no doubt, have produced a sufficient explanation of his intentions. I should less dread him as a foe than as a friend, as in the latter character he will, no doubt, make his court by suggestions to the prejudice of the Vizier; and as you have many and large claims on the Vizier, and a very delicate connexion with him, these circumstances will

unavoidably set his character in a point of view which will greatly discredit it, in the comparison with a man whose interest it will probably be to make himself acceptable on all occasions. You are too remote for advice, but I hope that the same moderation and prudence which appear to have hitherto guided your conduct towards the Vizier will have dictated to you the propriety of not forming any connexion with Nejifcawn, which may tend to disturb your engagements with the Vizier. In opposition to these, no offers which Nejifcawn may make, no pretensions which he may assert, no authority which he may produce from the King himself, are to be allowed the smallest consideration.

I am sorry to find you have had so much cause to be dissàtisfied with the Nabob. In the last instance of it, I mean his insisting upon your marching to Bisooly, and cantoning on the banks of the Yarwafadar river, after having appointed Barelly for your quarters, and obtained the secure possession of Bisooly, I think his behaviour very culpable; and to prevent any improper or dangerous use from being made of the power which it was judged expedient to place in his hands, I hope you will receive, in reply to your letter from the Board, a discretionary reservation of an authority to act according to your own judgment in cases where the safety of the army shall be manifestly endangered.

His behaviour before and during the battle was neither a subject of surprise, nor indeed of concern. The want of personal or political courage would prove a virtue in the Vizier, regarded as a security of his fidelity towards us; and his unsteadiness, although in many respects it may prejudice the affairs in which we are mutually concerned, is as likely to prevent his attempting or executing any design which can ever materially hurt us. I make no doubt but he will seek

a pretence to evade the payment of the money due by his stipulation for the present service; but it shall be peremptorily demanded of him, and we have the sure means in our power, which he well knows, to enforce his compliance.

Your letter to the Board has been received, and will be duly acknowledged, and I hope in terms that will remove the difficulties of which you complain, though you will allow me to observe that the channel by which you have made them known was not regular, and might on some occasions prove an impediment to the consistency of our operations. I am, dear Sir, &c.

To Colonel CHAMPION.

Fort William, 27th May, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I am extremely sorry that the line which was drawn to separate your authority from the Vizier's has been productive of such grievous consequences as you mention. It never could have been suspected by the Board that their orders to you would have tied up your hands from protecting the miserable, stopped your ears to the cries of the widow and fatherless, or shut your eyes against the wanton display of oppression and cruelty. I am totally at a loss to distinguish wherein their orders have laid you under any greater restraint than your predecessors. No authority which the Board could have given could be capable of preventing the effects you mention, since they could give you no control over the actions of the Vizier further than the weight and influence of your counsel and advice.

The orders under which you at present act leave to the Vizier the power of directing the services to be performed, but leave you master of the means for performing them. This clear distinction of your respective powers was formed to prevent all disputes by removing every subject of doubt. If, in the exercise of his autho-

rity, the Vizier is guilty of oppression and other excesses, he only, as the agent, is culpable of it. You have a right, and it is your duty, to remonstrate against any part of his conduct, which may either dishonour the service or prove prejudicial to the common interest; but I protest I do not know what you could do more, or what the whole Board personally present and invested with their full authority could do more. They could exercise no coercive power over the Vizier without committing a violence equal to any of these we should complain of; the picture you have given of the Vizier's conduct, though general and allusive only, is shocking to humanity; but surely your advice and strenuous remonstrance against acts of oppression and wanton cruelty ought to prove some restraint, and if not, would be a justification of your conduct. You have afforded one instance, at the commencement of your present operations, when the Vizier put a stop to the ravages of the country at your intercession.

I have addressed the Vizier in the strongest terms on the subject of his general conduct, alluded to in your letters. If you will point out any other more effectual remedy to such proceedings, or any addition which could be given to your authority, not liable to the objection of establishing a divided power or an unjust usurpation of his authority, I will gladly agree to it; but to take the family of Hafez Ramit immediately under our protection would furnish him with a just plea to refuse his compliance with the stipulation made for the present service, as it would be in effect to conquer the country for the Company, and not for him. The Vizier would have cause to suspect, and the world would adopt the same belief, that with the person of the hereditary claimant of the country we meant to reserve a right, at some convenient period, to take possession from him; and while such an opinion prevailed, neither

could he establish his government in it, nor remain steady in his confidence and fidelity towards us. On better recollection, I have declined writing to the Vizier myself on this subject, as intimated in the beginning of this paragraph, lest the solicitude I might express on account of the family of Hafez Ramit should increase their misfortunes; but I have instructed Mr. Middleton to make the strongest representations on this subject, which will perhaps have a better effect than anything I could say from myself.

In the last letter from the Board, in answer to an application you made with much impropriety to them notwithstanding the occasion which by this measure you gave for objections, you will have received undeniable proofs of their desire to support the credit of the actual commander of their forces; and I hope the addition therein given to your authority will have amply provided for every case in which the safety of the army, or the success of the service, can be any ways endangered. I am, with esteem, dear Sir, &c.

To Colonel CHAMPION.

Fort William, 28th May, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I have received a letter from the Vizier complaining of the claim you made to search for treasure in Pelibeet, and of the behaviour of some gentlemen who were present at a conference he had with you on that subject, and who took upon themselves to become parties in the conversation.

I have already expressed my sentiments upon the subject of prize money to the army. The only instance wherein our troops in the present service could have any pretensions to it by the customs of war would be in the actual assault of a place by storm; in every other case it is clear that the capture becomes the sole property of the power carrying on the war. In the instance of Pelibeet, which made no sort of defence whatever,

but fell with the whole Rohilla country into the hands of the Nabob, in consequence of the victory, we had no more right to search or interfere at all in the riches it contained, than we had to ransack every defenceless village or house in the open country for plunder. It is true that our General obtained the victory and our troops bore the brunt of the action; but such was the tenor of our engagement with the Vizier, in consideration of which he stipulated to pay a certain sum to the Company, and to bear the whole expense of the service. His own argument is unanswerable on this subject; if we deprive him of the fruits of his conquest, we infringe the agreement upon which the expedition was set on foot, and he has a right on his side to refuse the payment stipulated to us, because he depended on the fruits of his conquest to enable him to make that payment. I must here remark that the particulars of this transaction, as mentioned by the Vizier, bear a very different appearance from your account of it, and that when I approved of the conduct you intended to have pursued, it respected only your intention of delivering up whatever might be taken to the Vizier, and waiting for the Board's determination. With respect to Pelibeet, however, and to every capture in the present service, except, perhaps, in the case of plunder taken in an actual assault, the right is clearly the Nabob's, and will admit of no disputation. This is my positive decision on the subject, which must be regarded by you as an instruction for your conduct, until you receive the sentiments of the select committee, in case you should judge it necessary to apply to them on this subject.

With respect to the behaviour of those gentlemen present at your conversation with the Vizier, of which he complains, I am extremely sorry that an inattention to the established customs among people of rank in this country, which I am well convinced could not be

intended on your part, should have been the cause of so much mortification to the Vizier; for agreeably to their ideas of respect, it must have been extremely mortifying to him, when he came to converse with you upon a particular point of importance, to find those whom he regarded as inferiors, obtrude their conversation upon him. To avoid every disagreeable circumstance of this kind, I have always made it a rule myself to have no person present upon such occasions, except where an interpreter was necessary, and he only for explaining what was said. I recommend the same practice to be invariably pursued by you, and in the present case I am in some measure necessitated to prescribe this mode to you, as the means whereby a free intercourse of opinions may take place between the Vizier and you, and all uneasinesses and misapprehensions be avoided.

There yet remains a circumstance mentioned in a former letter of yours, to which I have omitted to reply, and which I am at present led to consider from the nature of the subjects I have been treating of. formerly recommended to you to prohibit any officer under your command from visiting the Vizier without obtaining your previous permission, and this you acquaint me has given much offence to Colonel Gailliez, and Lieutenant-colonel Lesslie. But as it is an established and a necessary rule in the service, I do not see any right these gentlemen have to be offended at an adherence to it. I am rather disposed to think that the manner and occasion upon which you made this order public were the cause of displeasure to these gentlemen, than the nature of the order itself. As it could only affect the superior officers of your army, your signifying to them privately that you expected their compliance with this regulation, in consequence of an injunction you had received from me, would fully

have answered the intention of enforcing it, and removed the odium of the measure from yourself. But to publish it in general orders to the army immediately after Colonel Gailliez had made a visit to the Vizier, most undoubtedly implied a public censure of his conduct, and I do not wonder that it proved to him a subject of much mortification. With respect to my motives for recommending this measure to you, it was unnecessary for me to declare that they were directed entirely to the support of your authority and dignity in command. To exempt the second in command from the effect of this restriction, however, in your present situation, it may be unnecessary to an undesigning and open disposition like Colonel Gailliez's, yet the chief intention of the regulation consists perhaps in the check it might prove to the conduct of the second officer, if he possessed an intriguing disposition, and an inclination to thwart the measures of his superior: that there are many such characters among mankind, your own observation must have informed you. I am with esteem, dear Sir, &c.

To Colonel CHAMPION.

Fort William, 28th May, 1774.

Dear Sir,—Notwithstanding the discretionary power which, before this reaches you, you will have received from the Board respecting the cantoning the brigade during the rainy season, I must express it to be my particular desire that you will not make any immediate use of that power to oppose the Vizier's wish of cantoning at Bisooly, unless some powerful necessity should compel you to do so, as I confess I cannot disapprove of the reasons which the Vizier urges for this change of his plan, and which I was not acquainted with when your letter from the Board was written. He says that he hears some Rohilla chiefs are collecting forces together in the division of that country subject

to Zabita Cawn, and therefore wishes to canton at Bisooly in order to act against them as soon as their assembling is certainly known; as well as to be ready to oppose any attempts of the Mahrattas, which, if made at all, would probably be directed against the most distant parts of his new conquests. I own these arguments appear of great weight to me; and as the objects of the campaign are upwards, I think the very reason you assign of the rivers between you and the province of Oude, is in favour of your cantoning at Bisooly, as those rivers will then be in your rear, and nothing before you to oppose your progress towards any enemy who may appear. It will not materially affect the question, although the Vizier's reports should prove without foundation, since there will be always a probability of the enemy collecting in that quarter while the war continues.

I do suppose that, before you can have received the orders of the Board, you must already have put the troops into quarters; and to change them in the beginning, or it may be the very height of the rains, in opposition to the Vizier, and by a movement which may have the appearance of a retreat from the country which is the object of the war, may not only furnish occasion for constructions abroad to the prejudice of our affairs, but afford him a pretence to complain of a breach of our agreement with him. I understand that it is his determined intention to quarter his own army at Bisooly, which will be some kind of security against our being distressed for provisions, for while his army is supplied, ours can never want. Upon the whole, though I have the greatest confidence in your prudence and moderation, yet as you have received a formal authority to do what, according to my sentiments, would be repugnant to both, I think it incumbent upon me to offer you this caution. I am, dear Sir, &c.

To Colonel CHAMPION.

Fort William, 30th May, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I am extremely pleased with the intelligence you send me of the Vizier's having dismissed Madoc and Gentil from his service, but I am still more rejoiced at the good understanding which you say subsists between you and his excellency. I have no doubt that you will use your utmost endeavours to cultivate this harmony on account of the obvious advantages resulting from it to all our measures and interests.

Since writing my letter of the 28th, in which I offered reasons against your removing from Bisooly, unless necessity should compel you, I learn from private letters that you had begun your cantonments there by the 11th instant. This is so strong an argument in addition to those I have already urged, that I am sure you will yourself apply it, and I will not therefore add anything to them, but an expression of my wish that you will use the discretional power given you by the Board, as your prudence and moderation may induce you to think most eligible. I am with esteem, dear Sir, &c.

To Colonel CHAMPION.

Fort William, 4th June, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I have received a letter from the Vizier acquainting me of his intentions to proceed to Fyzabad for the purpose of raising the stipulated payment which will be due to the Company on account of the cession of the Corah and Allahabad provinces. He also mentions that he will leave his sons and his army at Bisooly with the brigade, and only carry a small guard with himself, and that he will not be absent longer than a month, or a month and a half. He expresses himself as very desirous that his journey should occasion no distrust in you, and requests of me to write

to you on this subject. As the reasons which the Vizier assigns for his journey are very plausible, and if they even were not, as he must be master of his own conduct in a measure of this kind, I have made no objections to his absence, and I have engaged that you likewise would make none. It will be proper, however, to settle the measures requisite for the regular payment of the troops and the necessary supplies of provision during his absence: this done, I can see no inconvenience that will attend his journey. I have earnestly entreated him to return to the army in time to recommence your operations early in the next season. I am with esteem, dear Sir, &c.

To Colonel CHAMPION.

Dear Sir,—I am now to reply to your letter dated the 28th of May.

The following are my sentiments on the propositions which have been made to you, by Abdureem Cawn on the part of Fyzula Cawn.

The first is not to be listened to. It would be a direct violation of our treaty with the Vizier.

The second must depend solely upon the Vizier: and if it is not agreeable to him, we could neither compel nor insist upon his acceding to it.

The third is exactly the same as the second, with the difference only of offering money to the Company for influencing the Vizier, for which reason I would, of the two, prefer the second to the third, because such an agreement must become public, and a conduct of this kind would breed perpetual distrust in the Vizier against every future advice we should give him.

These are my particular objections to the several propositions; but I have one general objection to the whole of them, which is, that they are diametrically opposite to the principle on which the Rohilla expedition was on our part undertaken, which was not merely on

account of the pecuniary acquisition of forty lacs of rupees to the Company, for although this might be an accessory argument, it was by no means the chief object of the undertaking. We engaged to assist the Vizier in reducing the Rohilla country under his dominion, that the boundary of his possessions might be completed, by the Ganges forming a barrier to cover them from the attacks and insults to which they were exposed, by his enemies, either possessing or having access to the Rohilla country. This our alliance with him, and the necessity for maintaining this alliance, so long as he or his successors shall deserve our protection, was rendered advantageous to the Company's interest, because the security of his possessions from invasion in that quarter is in fact the security of ours. But if the Rohilla country is delivered to Fyzula Cawn, the advantages proposed from this alliance will be totally defeated. The same objections from the Vizier will take place against him, as against Hafez Ramit. He will be actuated by the same principles of self-defence, and the same impressions of fear, to seek the protection of other powers against the Vizier, and of course will create the same jealousies and suspicions in the mind of the Vizier, with the additional and strong incentive to a mutual animosity of an enormous debt, which probably Fyzula Cawn will find no other means to get clear of, but by engaging in hostilities against the Vizier.

The preceding letters, if they stood alone, would, I conceive, set the question of Mr. Hastings's humanity, during the progress of the Rohilla war, at rest for ever; but they do not stand alone. There is now lying before me a voluminous correspondence between Mr. Hastings and Mr. Middleton, by which, though I may not ven-

ture largely to make use of it, two facts seem to be established. First, it is quite clear, that not only were Colonel Champion's charges against the Vizier ridiculously exaggerated, but that they sprang rather from personal hostility to the man, than from abhorrence of his proceedings. Second, that never was arrangement more judicious than that which substituted for a military officer, as resident at the court of Oude, a gentleman in whom the head of the British Government could repose unlimited confidence. I think, also, that in the few extracts which the accumulation of my materials will alone permit me to give, sufficient evidence is afforded, that the determination of Mr. Hastings to treat the correspondence of his agent as confidential was a wise one. Mr. Hastings had but one object in view, namely to carry on the affairs of the government with as little jarring and discord among individuals as possible. But jarring and discord are scarce to be avoided, under any modification of the British constitution, unless there be open to the executive channels of information, which are not accessible to the deliberative branch of the legislature.

In the letter of instructions with which Mr. Middleton was supplied, and which bears date 28th January, 1774, I find the following paragraphs :—

"You will reside constantly near the Vizier, and

accompany him in the field. You will desire to see him, of course, when you have business to impart to him; but in visits of mere ceremony or respect you will conform to his inclinations. I wish you to study his temper, and endeavour to acquire his confidence, shunning every appearance of mystery and intrigue, and by a cautious observance of the forms of civility; but address him in plain terms, and with firmness, upon every subject of business which may require it.

"If any servant of the Company, of whatsoever rank, and whether civil or military, shall find his way thither without my authority, you are to command him, in my name, to depart immediately; and inform me of every such instance which shall happen within your knowledge, as I am resolved to put an effectual check to the unbecoming intrusion which I have reason to believe has been frequently practised on the Vizier, and even in his hours of retirement."

In pursuance of these instructions, Mr. Middleton proceeded to Lucknow, where, finding that the Vizier was already in the field, he followed him to his camp. He thus became an eye-witness of the whole of the Nabob's proceedings, his reports of which certainly do not tally, in every particular, with those of Colonel Champion. But with this I have no concern. My business is to show that Mr. Hastings never sanctioned nor approved of any act of severity on the part of the Nabob to the family of Hafez Rhamit, far less that he sold, as he was accused of having done, the lives of the unoffending Rohillas for money. I think that the following extracts at once establish that point, and

place the writer in the light of a just and prudent ruler, anxious, indeed, to secure for his own nation all that he was entitled to claim, yet not less desirous of acting in good faith towards an ally.

To Mr. Middleton.

27th May, 1774.

I have received your letter of the 7th instant, with the Vizier's enclosed. My answer to the latter, which, with an English copy, I send herewith, will, I hope, satisfy his Excellency, and prevent a repetition of the complaints hereafter. I have pronounced decisively on the claim laid by Colonel Champion to any plunder which may be found in the places taken by our united operations. Should Colonel Champion think it necessary to appeal this matter to the Board, their decision upon it must necessarily supersede mine; but my orders will effectually prevent a resumption of such a claim in the mean time. Be pleased to explain this to the Vizier. I do not think it likely that the Colonel will carry this matter further, nor that he can support the pretensions of the army by any argument or precedent of weight.

It has been thought proper to allow the Commander-in-chief a right to decline compliance with any requisition of the Vizier's, which shall evidently expose the army to sickness or any other unnecessary danger; and in particular he is authorized to quit the station allotted for their cantonments at Barelly, if they shall prove hurtful to the health of the troops, or cut off their communication with the countries from which they can be supplied with provisions. These orders were the necessary consequence of his representations; but I should not have approved of his changing the quarters of the army if I had received your explanation of the Vizier's motives earlier. I really think

such a situation preferable to one less remote, if there is the slightest chance of the enemy collecting in the province; and if the Vizier himself remains in the same spot, every objection to it, on our part, loses its principal force. Should the Colonel make use of the discretion allowed him, either in this particular instance or on any other occasion, I must insist on your informing yourself of every circumstance that may affect either the reasons alleged in support of such a measure or the Vizier's arguments in opposition to it.

Colonel Champion complains of the conduct of the Vizier in suffering, and even ordering, his troops to ravage the country, and in his cruel treatment of the family of Hafez Rhamit. This is a subject on which I cannot write to the Vizier. It might widen the breach between him and the Commander-in-chief, and probably influence the Nabob to some private revenge on the unhappy remains of Hafez Rhamit's family. I desire, therefore, that you will take an immediate occasion to remonstrate with him against every act of cruelty or wanton violence. The country is his, and the people his subjects. They claim by that relation his tenderest regard and unremitted protection.

The family of Hafez have never injured him, but have a claim to his protection in default of that of which he has deprived them. Tell him that the English manners are abhorrent of every species of inhumanity and oppression, and enjoin the gentlest treatment of a vanquished enemy. Require and entreat his observance of this principle towards the family of Hafez. Tell him my instructions to you, generally but urgently enforce the same maxims; and that no part of his conduct will operate so powerfully in winning the affections of the English, as instances of benevolence and feeling for others. If these arguments don't prevail, you may inform him directly that

you have my orders to insist upon a proper treatment of the family of Hafez Rhamit; since in our alliance with him our national character is involved in every act which subjects his own to reproach; that I shall publicly exculpate this government from the imputation of assenting to such a procedure, and shall reserve it as an objection to any future engagements with him, when the present service shall have been accomplished.

The following relates, in part, to the unbecoming disposition which Colonel Champion evinced to arrange, on his own account, terms of submission with Fuzulla Cawn, the only Rohilla chief who still held out. Like a former letter addressed to Colonel Champion himself, it is designed to enforce the great political maxim, that no power which supports another, as the mere second in a war, has the smallest right to assume a prominent place in the negociations which are to conclude that war. For Colonel Champion seems never to have understood that his sole business was to fight. He was perpetually involving himself in the intricacies of diplomacy; now listening to the demands of Nujiff Cawn, who claimed, on behalf of his master, the Mogul, a share in the conquered country; now suggesting the propriety of taking the family of Hafez Rhamit under the protection of the English; and again consenting to treat with Fuzulla Cawn, through the medium of his own agents. The temper and good sense with which Mr. Hastings interfered to put a stop to the former

of these proceedings have been sufficiently illustrated in his letters to Colonel Champion; his communications to Mr. Middleton, in reference to the latter, are not less marked by the same invaluable qualities.

To Mr. MIDDLETON.

Fort William, 17th September, 1774.

The subject of your letter of the 22nd has exceedingly distressed me, as I could not quote your authority without weakening your influence with the Colonel, which I wish to avoid; and yet it was too dangerous to admit of the continuance of the power which he has hitherto permitted Collichum to exercise to the injury of the public affairs and his own honour. Fortunately his own letters afforded me since an occasion to repeat my remonstrances on this subject, which I have expressed in terms that ought to produce the effect intended by them. If they do not, I fear I must use other means; but for your satisfaction and my own, I desire that you will hereafter make a distinction between such matters contained in your letters as you mean only for my private information, and such as you propose, or have no objection to have produced, if required, on record. I have hitherto used your letters with great caution, many things being requisite for me to know which I could not desire you to write were all your correspondence to be made public. I am as little pleased with the deputation of Mr. Murray. Your objections to it are strictly just, and I am surprised that they failed to convince Colonel Champion. It has ended as might have been expected; and the presumptuous behaviour of Fyzulla Cawn fully verified your observations upon it. I have written to Colonel Champion, in peremptory terms, that he must not

employ any person in future on such deputations, but leave the Vizier to make use of such means of accommodation, and such agents, as he pleases, this being his exclusive province, and ours only to act in the field. This I desire you will tell the Vizier, if the war is not brought to an end before you receive this. I much fear this will be the case, notwithstanding the weakness and despicable state of the enemy, if he suffer himself to be longer amused by negociations. He ought to dictate and receive but one reply. If that be a refusal, he should call upon the Colonel to proceed with his forces against the enemy, and accept of no subsequent terms but immediate submission, nor suffer a minute's delay to take place in any overtures whatsoever. * * *

To Mr. MIDDLETON.

24th September, 1774.

I enclose an extract from a late letter of Colonel Champion to the select committee, on the subject of which I am earnestly solicitous to have the fullest and most certain information. The Colonel must receive every information of this kind at second hand, and he may be deceived. Circumstances may be much exaggerated; but his representation is positive and peremptory, and the Vizier must appear in the blackest colours on our records, if what the Colonel affirms stands uncontradicted. I wish the truth to appear, neither glossed by favour nor blackened by prejudice; let me, therefore, beg of you to furnish me with the fullest information you can obtain of the Vizier's treatment of the family of Hafez Cawn, and to support your accounts with the strongest proofs that can be produced. Hitherto the circumstances of that kind which you have had to mention have been satisfactory.

It is not necessary to pursue the subject further. The Rohilla war, as is well known, came to a

satisfactory conclusion early in the winter of 1774. Like all conquests in which half-civilised nations are engaged, it was doubtless marked here and there by some acts of cruelty; yet its general character was the reverse of cruel,—at least towards the owners of the soil, over whom the Rohillas had for forty years exercised a grinding tyranny. The former, to the amount of two millions of people, became the subjects of the Vizier, while the latter, an armed band of twenty-six thousand men, withdrew, under their own leaders, to seek conquests and settlements elsewhere.

CHAPTER XIII.

Parliamentary Proceedings concerning the Affairs of India—The Regulating Act of 1773—Arrival of the new Councillors at Calcutta—Beginning of Strife.

WHILE Mr. Hastings thus laboured to retrieve the fallen fortunes of his employers, and to establish in the provinces an efficient system of general administration, the King's government at home were pressing forward their parliamentary inquiry, and preparing a bill, which, after a good deal of delay, resulted in the act 13 Geo. III., commonly called the Regulating Act. By the law in question several important alterations were effected in the machinery by which the Company's affairs were conducted. The Courts of Proprietors and Directors continued indeed in their integrity, but the qualification to vote in the former body was raised from £500 to £1000 stock; whilst in the latter, each director, instead of being liable, as heretofore, to an annual election, was entitled, when once chosen, to retain office during four years, and again, after an interval of one year, to be re-elected. In like manner the Crown, without claiming any power of direct control, asserted its right to be

informed respecting the most important of the Company's transactions, by requiring that the directors should, within fourteen days of their arrival, forward to one of his Majesty's secretaries of state all such advices as might have been received relative to the civil and military and political affairs of British India. Meanwhile the forms of the local governments, and, to a certain extent, their powers, were entirely changed. Instead of a president and council at each of the three presidencies, all independent of one another, and therefore in some sort rivals, the Regulating Act established for Bengal a Governor-general with four councillors, who were so far to exercise dominion both at Madras and Bombay, that with them, and with them exclusively, rested the power of forming or dissolving alliances, and of engaging in transactions of peace and war with the native governments. At the same time it is fair to acknowledge that the meaning of the Act was on this head liable to be misunderstood; for the same clauses which appeared to establish the supremacy of the government in Bengal, secured to those of Madras and Bombay their ancient privileges. Accordingly, when grounds of dissension actually arose between them, they seem alike to have distrusted the extent of their own authority; for the one issued orders, which it lacked the power or the will to enforce, and the other disobeyed, though not without

the apparent consciousness that disobedience was in the eye of the law a crime.

The framers of the Regulating Act were certainly to blame for this. They ought to have expressed themselves more clearly, if indeed they intended that powers awarded by the law should be carried into force; yet was the error in this respect trivial when compared with another, of which it remains to speak. In the supreme government, consisting, as has been stated, of a Governor-general and four councillors, no superior privileges, no discretionary powers were intrusted to the individual at the head of the government. The Governor-general took his seat at the Board as president of the meeting, and nothing more. Every question must first be discussed, and then decided by a plurality of votes, nor could he, be the case ever so urgent, presume to act on his own responsibility, much less set at nought the decision at which the Council might have arrived. Now it is manifest that, as far as his means of usefulness stood affected, the Governor-general, supposing him to be an able and an honest man, became, under the improved form of administration, even more helpless than he used to be under the old. In a body of ten or twelve councillors, the very number of the persons to be acted upon by reasoning, held out at least some prospect that reasoning might succeed. When the deliberative body

consisted of no more than five members, the chance of commanding majorities, if it should be necessary to obtain them by force of argument, was, to say the least of it, weaker. Was this defect, for such it must be acknowledged to have been, the result of inadvertency or of design? I confess myself inclined to believe that it was no act of inadvertence. I think, on the contrary, that, when we take into account the ultimate designs of the King's government, we shall discover good ground for assuming that the arrangement was made not without design. Recommendations to unanimity might go forth as numerously and as earnestly as words could make them; but unanimity in a body constituted like the Supreme Council at Bengal was next to impossible. And what would follow?

It is quite certain that, from the hour when the East India Company first became a great political body, the King's government ceased not to aim at the overthrow of their privileges, and the transference of the Indian patronage from the hands of the proprietors to their own. Not yet, however, were the people of England accustomed to treat chartered rights with contempt, or to consider acts of spoliation as matters which nowise concerned them; so long as the parties plundered were bodies corporate, and no more. Moreover, the people of England were jealous then of the influence of the

Crown, and of its ministers, and had no desire to see the patronage of the latter swelled to an amount which might endanger their liberties. It was, therefore, difficult for the minister, be he who he might, to accomplish his darling object at all. The object was clearly unattainable except by very skilful management and address. I have elsewhere spoken of the zeal with which each successive Cabinet laboured to impress the public mind with a conviction of the unfitness of the Company's servants to bear rule. A wealthy nabob, as the retired Indian was in those days called, never returned home without being pointed to as one who fattened on the miseries of his fellow creatures, while it was broadly hinted that the prodigious amount of treasure, which by the Company's misrule went only to enrich individuals, might, and if properly managed would, place the whole people of England in a state of comparative affluence. It is marvellous how attentive mankind are to such as tell them of good things which they ought to possess, yet have not. By constantly dunning this charge into men's ears, the Government succeeded, by degrees, in gathering a formidable party round themselves, and, believing that the time had come when the last touch might be applied to their picture, they fell upon an ingenious, if not a very honest method of doing so.

Mr. Hastings was, and had been from the com-

mencement of his administration, a great thorn in the side of the minister. His measures, however bold, had all been crowned with success, and there seemed every prospect, provided he were left to follow out his own projects to the end, that the affairs of the Company might right themselves. But the minister had no desire to witness this consummation. His wishes all pointed in a contrary direction, and he therefore determined, while changing the constitution of a body which he was not yet strong enough immediately to overthrow, so to manage matters as that the act of its own representatives might be received by the people of England as evidence against itself. The first thing to be done in order to effect this was, so to arrange the machinery of the new government, as that Mr. Hastings might be at the mercy of those with whom he should be associated. The next, to make choice of men to fill office as councillors under him, who, understanding the minister's views, and ready to work for their accomplishment, should not be troubled with many scruples as to the best means of doing so. Both schemes the minister had the good fortune to carry out without exciting the suspicion at least of the legislature. On Mr. Hastings, of course, whom it would have injured himself to recal, the nominal powers of Governor-general were conferred; but these powers the subsequent appointments at once annulled, for out of

the four gentlemen who were associated with him, there was only one, Mr. Barwell, who either from previous habits, or from knowledge of the subject, could be expected to support his measures. The remaining three, namely Lieutenant-general Clavering, the Honourable George Monson, and Philip Francis, Esq., were remarkable for nothing so much as their subserviency to the will of the existing Cabinet, unless indeed it were in the parade which they had been accustomed to make, of a righteous horror at the atrocities which had been practised by the Company's servants on the defenceless people of India.

It was not, however, by these means alone, that the authors of the Regulating Act struck, as they conceived, a heavy blow at the future existence of the East India Company. The bill which gave to Bengal its Governor-general and Council created for it and for Bahar and Orissa a supreme court of judicature, of which the jurisdiction was declared to extend over all the subjects of the British crown resident within these provinces, and to which appeals from the provincial courts were appointed to lie. The law to be administered in this court was of course the law of England, and all offences and misdemeanors tried there, were to be decided by a jury of British subjects. Moreover, provision was made for the establishment at Calcutta of all the forms and processes of which the English people

are enamoured. There was to be the power of attachment, vested in the judges, the right of committal for contempt of court, authority to issue writs of *habeas corpus*, everything, in short, which appertains to, or is characteristic of, our courts of law, without any exception having been made in favour of the Governor-general himself. In a word, the supreme court of judicature, consisting of one chief justice and three puisne judges, was to wield such powers both in Calcutta and elsewhere, as were clearly incompatible with the existence in British India of any authority superior to itself. Hence the provinces of British India ran no little hazard, sooner or later, of finding their rulers and their judges struggling with one another for rights, which both might claim, yet both pronounce to be manifestly inconsistent with the rights and privileges of the other party.

In addition to these provisions, the bill in question took cognizance of a variety of points into which it is scarcely necessary to enter. It was determined, for example, that, in the event of the death or resignation of the Governor-general, the councillor next in rank should succeed to his office, and that the directors should be at liberty to fill up the vacancy thus occasioned in the Supreme Council for the remainder of the five years, though subject, as a matter of course, to his Majesty's approbation. From and after the expiration of

the five years, however, the power of nominating and removing all future Governors-general was to be vested in the Directors; a sort of saving clause this, which the minister judged it expedient to insert, as well for the purpose of smoothing down opposition on the part of the Company and their friends, as to give a show of moderation to a proceeding which had, in point of fact, no portion of the spirit of moderation in it.

Of the proceedings of the King's government, and of the results in which they were expected to terminate, Mr. Hastings was not kept in ignorance. Rumours, indeed, of changes even more complete than those actually in preparation, from time to time reached him, and his letters show that he dreaded the issue, much more upon public grounds than upon private. Nevertheless, when the true state of the case became apparent, he braced himself to meet the probable difficulties which would follow, and resolved to act in all contingencies fairly, and in a spirit of frankness, as became a man conscious of his own integrity, and nowise diffident of his own powers. He seems without doubt to have entertained but an indifferent opinion of the fitness of the individuals selected to work out the new system. He more than insinuates as much in his confidential communications with his friends. Still he not only made no display of these feelings, but he adopted the wise and

becoming course of affecting an opposite belief, and strove to win their confidence by making to them at the outset a tender of his own. The following letters were despatched to Madras, at which place his colleagues, on their way from England, were expected to touch, and I think that the bitterest enemy of the writer can have nothing to object to in their phraseology.

To PHILIP FRANCIS, Esq.

Fort William, 26th August, 1774.

SIR,—I take the earliest opportunity of addressing you on your arrival in India, and congratulating you on your appointment to a share of the administration of this government. I received with particular pleasure, a letter from General Clavering, wherein he unites with his own intentions an assurance of your disposition to co-operate in measures of public utility. My hopes and wishes are equally sanguine, to concur heartily in such measures as will most fully answer the intention of your appointment, and reflect honour on our councils. I shall impatiently expect your arrival here, both from the personal satisfaction I propose to myself from it, and the desire of entering upon the several public measures which may be necessary for the discharge of the great trust confided to our joint direction. I am with esteem, &c.

To the Hon. Col. MONSON.

Fort William, 26th August, 1774.

Sir,—Although I hope shortly to have the pleasure of seeing you at this presidency, yet as you propose touching first at Madras, I cannot deny myself the use of this early opportunity of offering you my congratulations on your appointment to a place in the new

administration of these provinces. Though I have not the advantage of being personally known to you, I flatter myself we shall not meet on the footing of mere strangers, and I beg leave to assure you that I shall seek to cultivate both your friendship and confidence, as well from personal prepossession as from a conviction of the necessity of such a mutual understanding for the conduct of the great and difficult affairs in which we have been joined. To declare these sentiments, and to bespeak the concurrence of your's, is the motive of this address, in which if I have transgressed the common forms, it is because I feel myself placed in a situation which entitles me to dispense with them.

As I understand that Lady Anne Monson is to be the companion of your voyage, I beg the favour of you to present my compliments to her, in the hopes that I may have the honour still to bear a place in her remembrance. I am with esteem, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

In the same spirit of candour and manly frankness, he addressed himself to General Clavering, who, writing from London, had in some sort taken the lead in the correspondence. But with Sir Elijah Impey, he, of course, assumed a more confidential tone. They were personal friends of long standing, and the memory of former days could not but mix itself up with anticipations of the future. The following speaks for itself:—

To ELIJAH IMPEY, Esq.

Fort William, 25th August, 1774.

My dear Impey,—Advices from England seldom afford either pleasure or pain unmixed, but the news

of your late appointment to preside over the High Court of Justice, constituted by Parliament, affords me every cause of satisfaction without a circumstance of regret to allay it. In truth, my friend, nothing else could have reconciled me to that part of the Act, which, if any latitude is left to you in its first establishment, may, and I am sure will, be made a source of the most valuable benefits to this country. I need not say how much I rejoice in the prospect of seeing so old a friend, independently of the public advantages which that friendship, cemented (if it required it) by the same connexions, cannot fail to produce in the conduct of such affairs as are likely to fall to our respective or common lot.

With respect to my own situation, I shall say nothing till we meet, but that I shall expect from your friendship such assistance as the peculiar circumstances of my new office and connexions will enable you effectually to afford me for the prevention and removal of the embarrassments which I fear I am unavoidably to meet with.

Mr. Lane not being in Calcutta, and his house possibly occupied, I have taken another for your use, which you will find prepared for your reception. Colonel M'Lean has left his for your service, and I believe will be well pleased that you find occasion to take possession of it till you can be provided more to your liking. This I mention only that his intentions may not be wholly frustrated. I believe you will find yourself more at your ease in a house of your own, and therefore keep the other ready for you.

I have given a letter of introduction for you to young Stuart, the son of Lord Bute. Let me beg of you to take notice of him. He has hitherto had little employment, either because his hopes were higher than his pretensions from rank in the service, or perhaps

from the dissipation of a youthful mind. He is, however, ambitious of taking his share of public business, and it is my desire to encourage that ambition, by placing him in a situation which may give him occasion to distinguish himself. He has a good understanding, and by conversing with him you may pick up something to add to the stock of knowledge which you have already acquired of Indian matters.

On your arrival at Madras, where this is expected to find you, I beg you will write me a line over land, to inform me when you sail from thence. I fear you will be late.

I desire that you will present my compliments to your lady, and believe me, dear Impey, your sincerely affectionate friend.

On Wednesday the 19th day of October, 1774, the new members of council, bringing the judges of the supreme court in their train, disembarked at Calcutta. The ship which conveyed them from England had indeed anchored at Kedgeree as early as Friday the 14th, and Mr. Hastings lost no time, so soon as the event was communicated to him, in despatching the senior member of the Board then at the presidency, to congratulate them on the happy termination of their voyage. But it was not till the 19th that, under a salute of seventeen guns, they landed, and were conducted by an officer of rank in Mr. Hastings's staff, to the private dwelling of the Governor-general. There all the resident members of the existing Government were assembled to do them honour. Care,

too, had been taken to provide for them convenient lodgings; in short every disposition was exhibited, both by the president and his colleagues, to mark the degree of respect in which both they and the office were held. Yet the event proved, that whatever their desires might be, neither Mr. Hastings nor the members of the Board succeeded in making a good impression. The new councillors seem to have returned the civilities that were offered to them coldly; and their first despatch to the Court of Directors was filled with complaints of indignities which had been put upon them. But this is a trifle. We can scarce suppress a smile when we are told that three gentlemen arrived at the years of discretion, far more three persons entrusted with a large share in the government of a great empire, chafed because no guard of honour met them on the beach, and the guns from the batteries emitted only seventeen instead of twenty-one discharges. We are actuated by a very different feeling, so soon as we discover, that, without taking so much as a day to inquire, without having any local experience at all to fall back upon, these same gentlemen began their public life in India with a display of unmitigated hostility towards the Governor-general. I shall not enter here into any disquisition on this subject, far less explain in detail the grounds on which this hostility rested; for there are points

which the correspondence by and bye to be introduced fully sets forth. But a brief detail of facts as they occurred is necessary, and the following will serve both the reader's purpose and mine.

Messrs. Clavering, Monson, and Francis met the Governor, as has been described, at his private residence, on Wednesday the 19th. On the following morning a Council was formally held, when the commission was opened, which set aside the old and established the new constitution, and the Court's general letter of instruction was read. It recommended, above all things, unanimity and concord among the persons to whom the powers of the government were delegated. It urged them to preserve, by every means in their power, the peace of India in general, and of the Company's possessions in particular. It required them to meet in Council twice every week at the least. It committed to the Governor-general the charge of carrying on all correspondence with the country powers; desiring, however, that the letters proposed to be sent by him should, in the first instance, be approved by the Council, and that all letters received by him should be submitted to the Council at their first meeting. It impressed upon all parties the necessity of attentively reviewing the general posture of the Company's affairs, as these might be affected by any connexions formed at the moment, or likely to be formed hereafter, with the states around the three presidencies; and,

reminding them that by the Act they alone were authorized to determine in all questions whether of peace or war, it exhorted them to use great care in committing themselves, by alliances or otherwise, not with the native governments alone, but with those of other European nations. Meanwhile, that they might find more leisure to attend to graver matters, a Board of Trade was ordered to be erected, by which the commercial affairs of the Company might be conducted, but of which no one employed under the Governor or Council in the general management of the revenues was to become a member. Then again a strict investigation into the causes of an enormous military expenditure was enjoined. The reduction of the bonded debt was pressed upon them as an object of paramount importance. The system of letting the lands in farm, as introduced by Mr. Hastings, was generally approved, and the Council were advised to continue it. Finally, the letter recommended an inquiry into past abuses and oppressions as well as the enactment of such regulations as might effectually prevent their recurrence; and, exhorting the Council to give every possible aid towards establishing the supreme court and rendering the administration of justice easy, the letter concluded, as it began, with an earnest exhortation to unanimity.

Thus far matters went in their legitimate channel. The new authorities were installed in

their places, the country was made aware of the change that had occurred in the form of its government, and the machine, not yet wound up, seemed to require nothing more than the application of care at the outset, in order to ensure its working with regularity in all time coming. But care, meaning by that expression the exercise of caution and circumspection on the part of those recently appointed to office, was that of which they appeared neither to experience the lack, nor to know the value. They had read a clause in the Court's letter which desired them to inquire into abuses and oppressions past; and they seemed to believe that till that order should have been obeyed, there was no field open on which to exercise their talents. It was, indeed, not without difficulty that Mr. Hastings prevailed upon them to pause even for a single day in the career on which they had determined to enter. He reminded them that Mr. Barwell, one of their own body, was absent, and that his arrival at Calcutta could not be expected earlier than the 24th. He suggested that it might be prudent to receive from himself, a general account of the policy of their predecessors, ere they should proceed in sweeping terms either to approve or to censure; and he so far succeeded, that they consented to defer their next meeting till the 25th; but beyond this they would not yield a jot. Accordingly, on the 25th, the Council assembled for business, and then on the

very first day of their meeting, in other words within the limited space of six days from the arrival of the new members from England, that struggle of parties began, which throughout four long years continued to make its baneful influence felt to the remotest corners of the Company's possessions in India.

During the interval that accrued between the proclamation of the new government and the second meeting of the Supreme Council, Mr. Hastings had employed himself in drawing up a minute, which set forth in order, and with remarkable perspicuity, the whole tenor of his own and the late government's policy from the date of his appointment as president in 1772, up to the hour of the arrival of his new colleagues, and the changes which followed. Of the opening paragraphs in this minute, the Council took no further notice than generally to approve of the arrangements which he had made for the better collection of the revenue and the dispensation of justice throughout the provinces, and to order their continuance. But towards those which gave an account of the treaty of Benares, and of the transactions both of war and peace to which it had given rise, their deportment was widely different. They condemned the treaty on the score of policy, the war they denounced as alike impolitic and unjust; yet they professed their inability to arrive at any satisfactory conclusions respecting either, on the sort of evidence which the Governor-

general's minute afforded. The Governor had corresponded, it appeared, with Mr. Middleton, throughout the entire progress of the arrangements. It was necessary that they should be put in possession of this correspondence, and they formally demanded it. Now Mr. Hastings, as I have elsewhere explained, had charged Mr. Middleton not to confine himself in his correspondence to such communications as might be submitted, without reserve, to general inspection. Mr. Hastings, therefore, declined to produce letters, which as they were written under the sanction of a strict confidence, so were they filled with details which could interest no human being except himself. But he freely consented to furnish his colleagues with every sentence in these letters which might have a tendency to throw the faintest light on the subject under discussion; and entreated that they would not require more. The new members of Council took fire on the instant. They did not care what arrangements their predecessors might have come to, they could not recognize any authority in the Board to give the sort of double commission under which Mr. Middleton appeared to have acted; and seeing that the Governor-general refused to give up his own letters, they proposed that Mr. Middleton should be recalled from Lucknow, and undergo a personal examination. It was to no purpose that the Governor-general protested, and explained the

extent of injury which, from such a proceeding, the public service would inevitably sustain. The question was put to the vote; and in spite of the support of Mr. Barwell, who, not less than Mr. Hastings, saw that a storm was brewing, the votes went against the Governor, and the order for Middleton's recall was passed. Yet the very men who put this slight upon Mr. Hastings recorded, as their opinion, that the right of selecting a successor to Mr. Middleton was vested in the Governor-general, and that till such successor were appointed, the Governor-general should be requested to make the Vizier aware, that the Commander-in-chief of the English troops serving with his army ought to be regarded as the proper channel of communication between his highness and the British government. It is scarcely necessary to add, that of this unmeaning compliment Mr. Hastings took no notice whatever. He did not choose to be made the instrument of his own political degradation in the sight of one whom he had taught to look up to him as a protector, and he was too much master of himself to acknowledge as a mark of respect, resolutions which served but to aggravate fourfold the insult in which they originated.

The case of Mr. Middleton being thus summarily disposed of, the Council went on to consider both the grounds on which the Company had been involved in hostilities with the Rohillas, and

the results in which such hostilities might be expected to issue. It was no matter of surprise to Mr. Hastings and Mr. Barwell that the war itself was denounced as unjust and impolitic. Other proceedings of their colleagues had already prepared them for all manner of perverse and wayward judgments; and such a judgment as this, however rashly and ignorantly formed, seemed to be but in keeping with the whole of their bearing out of doors. For it was not long a secret, either at Calcutta or in the provinces, that to inquire rigidly into past abuses with a view to their correction, was, by the new members of government, considered as the most pressing and important of their duties. Accordingly their audience chambers were speedily beset by all, whether of native or European lineage, who conceived that, either in their own persons, or by neglect shown to their friends and relations, they had suffered wrong. They were appealed to by theorists whose plans had been scouted; by peculators who had been quietly removed from their offices; by public servants whom the mere change of system had deprived of employment, and by many more, who, in their eagerness to make friends of new men, conceived that they could not adopt a more ready method of doing so, than by bringing charges against the old. When I add, that among these visitors there was none so regular in his attendance or so welcome as Nuncomar; that his statements were all listened to

with avidity and himself encouraged to search for fresh grounds of accusation wherever an opening might seem to be presented, I shall have said enough to place in a proper point of view the sort of temper with which Messrs. Clavering, Monson, and Francis applied themselves to the great work of reforming the system and thereby consolidating the powers of the British government in India.

It excited no surprise in Mr. Hastings and Mr. Barwell to find, that the same men who insisted on the recall of Mr. Middleton, as a measure essential to the formation of a right judgment concerning the treaty of Benares and the Rohilla war, should, without waiting for the evidence which he might be able to supply, condemn both measures in the gross. The reasons, however, which their colleagues assigned for blaming the expedition into Rohilcund did, indeed, astonish them. Not only were the Rohillas declared to be a people brave and inoffensive, and therefore cruelly wronged, but their country lay so far apart from the limits of the British provinces, that the new members of Council were unable so much as to trace it out on the map. Now, as the home authorities were opposed to all wars, except wars of defence, and set their faces decidedly against distant expeditions, of which the object was conquest, this march into Rohilcund could appear to them in no other light than as a flagrant and a positive breach of

orders, while its results, though triumphant in the first instance, would surely bring evil on the Company, by the additional facilities which an extended line of frontier must necessarily afford to invasion from the Mahrattas. It was to no purpose that Mr. Hastings assured them of the extent to which, both as politicians and geographers, they had deceived themselves. Men who pinned their faith to a map compiled at a period antecedent to the date of the Rohilla invasion, and the subsequent change of name in the country which the Rohillas overran and had subjected, were not likely to believe Mr. Hastings when he told them that the Rohillas themselves were a mere band of Affghan adventurers, whose expulsion from Rohilcund could operate no other change in the condition of the rightful proprietors of the soil than by transferring them from the rule of these strangers to the dominion of the Nabob of Oude, to whose dominions their country adjoined.

Having come to these conclusions, the majority held themselves bound to take immediate steps for the repair of evils so serious and so flagrant. The next best thing to avoiding a war, for which there is no plea either in justice or sound policy, is to get out of it with as little delay as possible; and this much they felt that they had at least the power to accomplish. It was, therefore, proposed and carried, that instructions should be sent off for the return

of the Company's brigade within the ancient limits of the kingdom of Oude. The sums promised by the Vizier, as the price of their aid, were not, indeed, to be remitted; on the contrary, a delay of fourteen days was allowed, in order that time might be afforded him for paying up his arrears. But at the termination of this interval the troops were to begin their homeward march, without pausing to consider how the Nabob might be affected by the movement. Nay, nor was their zeal to correct abuses limited even by this. They considered the article in the treaty of Benares which threw upon the Nabob the expense of maintaining a third part of the Bengal army, as in every point of view objectionable. It was oppressive to the Nabob when acted upon, it was delusory in its consequences to the Company whether acted upon or not. For the Nabob's payments, depending on the extent of his own fears or his own caprices, could never be regarded as a permanent addition to the Company's resources; who, on the contrary, were tempted by them to keep on foot a larger military force than was necessary for the defence of their own territories; and keeping such force on foot, were never averse to find employment for it. Again Mr. Hastings used his best endeavours to prevent the execution of a device so well calculated to bring discredit, and therefore worse evils, if such there be, on the British power in India.

His reasoning was either not attended to, or it failed to convince; and his protest, with whatever degree of solemnity uttered, availed nothing. A letter was written, by order of the majority, and sent off on the very day which brought from Colonel Champion an account of the successful termination of the war, and of his own intention, so soon as he should have put his troops in quarters at Ramgaut, to resign the command to the officer next to him in rank, and return himself to the presidency.

Of the events which followed this most inauspicious beginning, I am not required to give a detailed account. It is matter of history that the contending parties, the majority of three on the one hand, and Mr. Hastings and Mr. Barwell on the other, made their respective appeals to the authorities under whom they acted; that the several members of the government drew up each his official statement, in which both the past and present aspect of things were set forth; and that the compilation of these despatches, with the controversies arising out of them, served but to widen the breach already created, and to render the chances of a reconciliation more distant than ever. Meanwhile, Mr. Middleton withdrew from the court of Oude, making way for a Mr. Bristow, of whom further notice will, in due time, be taken;

but of whom for the present it is sufficient to observe, that he had been one of the most constant attendants on Mr. Francis's levees, ever since that gentleman's doors were thrown open to the complaints of the public. But this is not all. The majority, who had objected to what they were pleased to term the private and irregular communications that passed between Mr. Hastings and Mr. Middleton, avowed their determination to maintain, not conjointly but severally, a confidential correspondence with Mr. Bristow. Thus the right which they had called in question, when exercised by the Governor-general, the members of Council claimed each for himself, of which the consequences were the virtual abandonment by its nominal head of all share in the government, and the undivided exercise of its powers by the faction which thwarted him.

The despatches which went home at this period are accessible to all men. I will not, therefore, make any extracts from them. But the following private letters, addressed by Mr. Hastings as well to the King's minister as to his personal friends, are too valuable to be passed over. They clear away the mists with which party violence contrived, at the moment, to obscure an important page in our history, while they furnish an ample vindication of the integrity and high-mindedness of the

man whose only error, if error it deserves to be called, was an unbounded and steady devotion to the interests of his country.

To LAURENCE SULIVAN, Esq.

Fort William, 4th December, 1774.

Dear Sir,—I have sent some papers to Mr. Palk, which he will show you. These will afford you a complete view of the state of affairs in this quarter. I am afraid you will see too close a resemblance in the disputes in which I am engaged to those between our late friend (Mr. Vansittart) and his Council; but I trust that, by the benefit of his example and my own experience, and by a temper, which, in spite of nature, I have brought under proper subjection, I shall be able to prevent the same dreadful extremities which attended the former. The violence with which the majority set out in the exercise of their new power has produced an effect in the Vizier's mind, the very reverse of what I expected, or was, perhaps, intended.

The first notification of Mr. Middleton's recall from his court was given in a letter from me to that gentleman who immediately carried it to the Nabob, and read it to him. It affected the Nabob so much that he burst into tears, regarding it as the overture to a train of hostilities directed against him. He immediately declared that he saw that he had no dependence but on my friendship, and that he would, in all things, be entirely ruled by my advice. This declaration he has since repeated by a message sent to me; and I hope to avail myself of this disposition to prevent his resenting any acts of this government, and to wait with patience till the orders from Europe shall arrive, which shall decide between me and my opponents.

Without friends, without any kind of personal interest, I have but a discouraging prospect; but I am

prepared for the worst, and shall return quietly and even contentedly to England the moment I hear of my recall, for there is no room for palliatives. I hope that my reputation will be spared; but, if it is to be blackened for the sake of giving a fair colour to the severity which may be exercised towards me, I will most certainly defend myself, and I am sure that I shall be able to do it to the shame of my calumniators. My actions are not to be condemned by maxims which are only applicable to the wild schemes of ambition. By the system which I have introduced into the political affairs of the Company, every military operation which was before an accumulation of expense, and undertaken without an object of termination in prospect, has become a source of economical advantages, and in every progressive state of it, to its conclusion, answered exactly to the original design of it. This is no vain boast, but a fact which the late campaign, in spite of many circumstances which might, if anything could, have defeated it, has amply illustrated. It will have brought, before the possible return of the brigade to its cantonments, seventy lacs into the Company's treasury, and added both to the power of our ally and the credit of his arms. But I am running into an unnecessary discussion. Let me entreat you to read my minute of appeal, &c. &c.

I hope my friends will approve the resolution I have taken to remain. I believe, that in spite of all the evils of a divided and contested rule, it were better than leaving the Company's affairs in hands, certainly not qualified by experience to conduct them. Barwell has engaged most heartily in my support, although much improper pains have been taken to win him from me. The classical consolation of *socios habuisse doloris* is the principal benefit I can expect from his aid or friendship, since three voices for ever combined against

me, form as effectual a majority as four would. He has quick parts and great abilities, which I shall endeavour to convert to useful purposes, if the others will let me.

The court of justice is a dreadful clog on the government, but I thank God the head of it is a man of sense and moderation. In all England a choice could not have been made of a man more disposed to do good and avoid mischief; which, however, is not wholly in his power, and I am sorry for it.

The following to Lord North takes a much wider review of the condition of affairs. It is long, but of its importance no doubt can be entertained.

4th December, 1774.

My Lord,—I esteem it an especial duty to acknowledge, by the earliest opportunity, the receipt of the letter with which your Lordship was pleased to honour me by General Clavering; and to mark, at the same time, the strong, the unaffected feelings of my heart, on the kind and handsome manner in which you were pleased to notify to me the part which you took in my late appointment. Being an entire stranger, without either personal or political connexion with your Lordship, I must look on the favour shown me as the most incontrovertible token of your Lordship's approbation of my past conduct, and it must bind me, by every tie of honour and gratitude, to seek the preservation of your esteem, and aim by all my actions in future to justify a choice which, may I be permitted to say so, on the ground in which it was made, must ever do credit to your intentions, however they may be disappointed in the event.

Till I received your Lordship's letter I own I remained in a state of doubt as to the motives and purpose of my appointment, whether an approbation of

my past measures gave rise to it, or whether I was included as a necessary part in a new system for the purpose of connecting its operations with those of the past; but your Lordship's explicit declaration effectually dispelled those doubts, and your assurances inspired me with a zeal beyond what I had ever felt before.

I hope it is not improper to express how much the notice you were pleased to convey to me of the wishes of the first person in the nation for my undertaking the arduous employment conferred on me by parliament, served to decide and animate my resolutions. My temper and views are moderate with respect to fortune, and many of the common objects of life, but I own I possess a more than ordinary degree of ambition to act in an elevated sphere under the auspices of my sovereign, and to recommend myself more and more to his favour, by conducting the great and important affairs committed to my charge to the best of my abilities for his honour and the advantage of his people.

A union of all the governments of the East India Company under one effectual control has long been an object of my wishes, and I received with double satisfaction the first notice of the late Act of Parliament, arising from the accomplishment of these wishes, and the gratification of my pride in finding myself nominated to the principal share in the execution of the new system. I foresaw the most important advantages which might be obtained from a proper application of the vast powers now concentered in the government, to the acquisition of new resources of wealth and influence to the British empire, not, my Lord, by desultory schemes of conquest or extension of territory, but by means which the most wary prudence might allow, and on grounds of moral certainty both of safety

and success. So sanguine were my hopes, that I had even taken some preparatory steps for the execution of this design, long before the arrival of the members of the new Council, not doubting that I should meet with their hearty assistance in promoting it.

Prepossessed as I was with these sentiments of confidence towards my new associates in the Government, and with such expectations from their united labours, your Lordship will readily conceive the mortification I feel in acquainting you that my hopes are already blasted, and a prospect opened to me of a very different kind from that which my imagination had painted.

The public despatches will inform you of the division which prevails in our councils. I do not mean in this letter to enter into a detail of its rise and progress, but will beg leave to refer to those despatches for the particulars, and for the defence both of my measures and opinions. I shall here only assure your Lordship that this unhappy difference did not spring from me, and that had General Clavering, Mr. Monson, and Mr. Francis, brought with them the same conciliatory spirit which I had adopted, your Lordship would not have been embarrassed with the appeals of a disjointed administration, nor the public business here retarded by discordant councils.

The cause assigned for these differences, your Lordship will observe, is the Rohilla war. I own I looked for praise rather than blame from this measure, because no visible consequence could be derived from it in the situation which these gentlemen found it, but such as was every way advantageous to the Company; but had they disapproved of it, I still think, that if their dispositions were to promote harmony and to maintain the credit of Government, free from inconsistency, they ought to have afforded me the means of receding,

without fixing a mark of reprobation on my past conduct, and without wounding my personal consequence by the recall of my public agent at the court of the Vizier, or the faith of Government which had been pledged for the completion of the Rohilla war, by the abrupt order issued for withdrawing the brigade engaged on that service. Had they conducted themselves on such conciliating principles, if I know my own heart, I should have cheerfully joined in whatever system they might afterwards have thought fit to adopt, not pretending, in such a case, to set my judgment in opposition to the will of the majority; but it was not to be expected that I should subscribe implicitly to a direct censure of my own measures, and, what is worse, to those violent resolutions by which not only the reputation of the Company, but also the benefit and advantages resulting from those measures were wantonly exposed to hazard, for no apparent purpose.

The indignity fixed upon me by the recall of Mr. Nathaniel Middleton was personal and direct. This gentleman has been employed for nine months past as resident at the Vizier's court, but his appointment had been understood during the late Government to be immediately dependent on me. The immemorial usage of the service had left the whole correspondence with the country powers in the hands of the Governor, and Mr. Middleton in that light could only receive his orders from, and address his letters to me. In the course of his correspondence, I had encouraged him to speak his sentiments freely, under the assurance of their never becoming the subject of public record in cases which I judged improper for such a communication. When therefore Mr Monson moved for the whole being laid before the Board, I could not, consistently either with honour or good faith, comply; I urged these reasons, but they were overruled, and Mr.

Middleton was immediately called from his station, and thus a declaration made to all Indoostan, that my authority was extinct, and that new men and new measures would henceforth prevail. I do not know what use my opponents may make of my refusal to show those letters; I declare I have submitted every part to their perusal, which was necessary for their information on public affairs, and as to those I have withheld, your Lordship will, I hope, one day judge of the propriety of my conduct in this respect, it being my intention, as soon as Mr. Middleton arrives, to collect my entire correspondence with him, and to offer it for your Lordship's inspection.

Unwilling to encroach any more on your Lordship's time, I once more refer to the public despatches for my defence, and shall conclude with assurances of my stedfast resolution to continue in my present station attended with all its disagreeable circumstances, till such time as the decision of my superiors shall either remove these, or dispense with my remaining longer under them. I own I have a confidence in your Lordship's justice, and in the goodness of my own cause, that leaves little anxiety on my mind for the event. I have never deviated from those maxims and that line of conduct which first recommended me to your Lordship's notice, and therefore cannot doubt of the continuance of your favour and protection. I am sensible how disagreeable it must be to your Lordship to see the measure which you had so wisely planned and steadily pursued to its accomplishment, thus thwarted in its execution by the disputes of the very persons whom your Lordship had charged with it, but I still trust the blame will be imputed to those only whose violent attacks occasioned it, and not to me whose sole aim has been to defend myself against them.

Although your Lordship will receive in the regular

course from the Court of Directors, the copies of all despatches from this Government to them; yet as these being official papers may not perhaps be so ready at all times for your perusal, and it is of consequence to me that your Lordship may be furnished with the means of reading in an hour of leisure those which contain the justification of my conduct, and a minute explanation of the measures which have been objected to me, I entreat your permission to lay before you, with this address, a copy of my letter written by this packet to the Court of Directors, and of the minute containing my appeal from the acts and opinions of the majority of the present Council. I lament the length of these papers, which may discourage your Lordship from the perusal of them, but I have wanted time to reduce them to a smaller compass, and I will venture to promise that they will present you with a connected and just state of facts. Your Lordship's penetration will detect any errors which I may have committed in the reasoning upon them.

An earnest desire not to overload my narrative with a greater bulk of correspondence than is absolutely necessary, alone prevents me from appending to this other letters upon the same subject. They seem to me to carry upon the face of them evident marks of truth, while they place their writer in the light of one who, seeking no benefit personal to himself, is chafed and chagrined only because his views of general policy are thwarted. I think, however, that the following extract from a communication to his friend Mr. Palk is extremely characteristic, and I am sure that it is

interesting. Speaking of his coadjutors in office, he says,—

"I find Sir Elijah the man you describe him, and much as I have always known him, moderate, sensible, and, to myself, friendly. It is happy for this country and for the Company that he is so, and that two persons so mutually well inclined are at the head of two departments most admirably adapted for hostility. General Clavering is, I verily believe, a man of strict honour, but he brought strong prejudices with him, and he receives all his intelligence from men whose aim or interest it is to increase those prejudices; and he has acted a foolish part, for which I could punish him, if I chose, by leaving him in the chair which he has taken much pains to strip of all its consequence, and to which neither his abilities nor his experience enable him to give a consequence of any other kind. Colonel Monson is a sensible man, but received his first impressions from Major Grant, and acts in all things from them. He no doubt thinks the second place better than the first. As to Francis, I shall say nothing of him. I shall stay out the issue of the troubles which their ill humour, or whatever secret motive they may have, has introduced; and that may either induce our friend George to continue some years longer in India, or you will see us both together about June, 1776. * * * I had formed great designs to be executed by the vast powers concentered by the Act of Parliament in the new Council, and had even set on foot some preparatory measures to forward them; but I find that we must hazard the fate of a *res consilii expers,* instead of aiming at flights of ambition."

While Mr. Hastings was thus communicating unreservedly with his friends at home, the hostile

spirit of his Council appears to have become day by day more rancorous. From the highest point in his general policy, down to his right of nominating to offices under government, they failed not, at all convenient opportunities, to thwart him. Not satisfied with superseding his agent at Lucknow, and taking out of his hands the right of confidential correspondence with their own; not satisfied with the general censure which they had cast upon treaties and military operations completed ere they came into power, and heartily approved of by the authorities at home; they endeavoured at once to excite against him the ill-will of the army, and to cover him with obloquy in the Court of Directors, as a man open to bribery himself, and therefore ready to connive at a similar disposition in others. Having branded his nomination of a civil resident at the Court of Oude as a gross insult to the military profession, they instituted an inquiry into the manner in which the Rohilla war had been conducted, and did their best to get up a case of cruelty against him, as if by his sanction every outrage of which the Vizier and his followers were accused had been perpetrated. Nay, to such a height was this wickedness carried, that General Clavering had the folly to ask Colonel Lesslie, "Did the army consider the war in which they were engaged as honourable to the British name, or the reverse?" Colonel Lesslie, as was to

be expected from a soldier and a gentleman, replied, that he could not answer for the opinions of others; and even Colonel Champion, perverse and wayward as he was, left, by his evidence, the personal character of the Governor-general free from an approach to stain.

Failing in this, and convinced against their will that the only parties subjected to evil by the war were bands of military adventurers, the Council proceeded to arraign Mr. Hastings, on the ground that he first encouraged the army to look for a pecuniary reward from the Vizier, in the teeth of the Act of Parliament which rendered the acceptance of presents illegal, and then, by requiring that reference should be made to the Supreme Council at Calcutta, evinced a disposition to place them in an invidious position towards the troops. "We cannot but lament," said they, in their curious minute, wherein they sought to set forth the reasons which induced them to receive seven lacs of rupees in deposit, "We cannot but lament the difficult and distressing situation to which the measures of the late administration have reduced the present government, by placing us between the strict prohibition of the law and the earnest desires of the army. The unhappy consequences of an offensive war, undertaken on such principles as that against the Rohillas, must operate in every direction. An innocent nation, with-

out offence, stripped of their property; one part of the conquering army engrosses the whole plunder, the other is disgusted; languor and despondency succeed; and when at last our troops return home, the difficulty of deciding between their claims and the prohibition of the law, is thrown upon the civil government." It would be hard to conceive a course of proceeding more vindictive as well as more unrighteous than this. For the men who recorded the minute knew that the Rohillas were not an innocent nation, that they were usurpers and plunderers, whose expulsion from Rohilcund left the natives in a better plight than ever; and that the offer of a present from the Vizier came in the natural course of things, which Mr. Hastings could not abruptly decline without doing violence to the feelings of his ally. Finally, it is certain, that had Mr. Hastings settled the point without reference to them, his decision, be it of what nature it might, would have been at once condemned as unwise and presumptuous. But we are as yet only at the beginning of troubles which, as the sequel will show, go on enlarging themselves from stage to stage.

CHAPTER XIV.

Continuation of Discords—Attacks on the private Character of Mr. Hastings—General Correspondence.

AMID squabbles such as these, in every respect discreditable to those with whom they originated and were carried on, the remainder of the year 1774 went out. There was no prospect of better things in store, to throw a halo over the dawn of the year that succeeded. The Benares treaty and the Rohilla war continued still to furnish fruitful topics of discussion, which, as men's passions became inflamed, grew, from day to day, less reasonable and less honest. To such a height, indeed, was the hostility of the new members carried, that they did not scruple to make an avowal of their desire to blacken the character of the Governor-general, be the consequences what they might. "The justification of our own conduct," say they, in one of their memorable despatches to the Court of Directors, "must of necessity carry with it, and will only be supported by a strong and deliberate censure of the preceding administration." Accordingly, having rung the changes for a while on these two flagrant offences, they turned their attention next to what may be termed the internal

administration of the country; and there, not less than in his foreign politics, they saw nothing in the whole bent of Mr. Hastings's proceedings, except abundant ground of censure. His fiscal arrangements were passed in review before them, and condemned. The leasing system, on which the land revenues were raised, they pronounced to be a failure; the arrangements entered into for securing to the Company an increased benefit from the taxes on opium, were denounced; the bank which, with so much care, he had established in Calcutta, they treated as a nuisance, and its abolition was peremptorily ordered. Mr. Hastings would have been more than mortal had he submitted to such usage without complaining. Both he and Mr. Barwell protested against the violence with which affairs were conducted, and threw themselves for support upon the home authorities.

Such was the state of feeling in the Supreme Council, the ostensible head of the government having become little better than a cypher, when certain events befel of which it is necessary to make mention, not more because of the influence which they exercised over the whole after life of the subject of this memoir, than because they give its peculiar character to an important page in English history.

In the month of January, 1775, died Shujāh Dowlah, the sovereign of Oude, after consigning,

with all solemnity, his son and successor, Murza Aumanee, to the protection of the British Government. One of the last acts, indeed, of the dying Nabob was to dictate a letter to Mr. Hastings, in which he implored the Governor to extend to his successor the same friendly feeling which he had himself uniformly experienced; without, however, entering at all into detail relative to any dispositions which he might have made for the due maintenance of his son's authority, or the distribution of his own accumulated wealth. I take especial notice of this circumstance, because, considering the terms on which the Vizier had long lived with Mr. Hastings, it seems difficult to believe that he would have concealed from the Governor-general the particulars of his last will, had they been in any way remarkable in their bearing; and as no such written deed was ever afterwards produced, the fair conclusion certainly seems to be that none such ever had existence.

The death of Shujah Dowlah brought immediately under the notice of the Supreme Council at Calcutta, two points of very great importance. First, a question was raised whether or not the treaty of alliance which Mr. Hastings had contracted with the deceased ought to be considered as binding in reference to his successor; and next, it rested with the British Government to decide how far they would sanction certain claims, which

the Begum, or widow of Shujah Dowlah, set up to be regarded as sole heir to the treasures of which her husband had died in possession. With respect to the former of these points, Mr. Hastings, supported as usual by Mr. Barwell, declared that there could be no room even for doubt. The treaties of Allahabad and Benares were clearly engagements between states. No change in the mere persons of the individuals by whom these states were governed could in any degree affect them, unless, indeed, there should be on one side or the other a positive violation of the terms; and hence, to speak of the voidance of the Company's engagements as a consequence necessary upon the demise of Shujah Dowlah, was, in their opinion, to assert an absurdity. As well might Portugal claim the right of setting aside the Methuen treaty, on the ground that it had been contracted under a sovereign long dead, as the Company turn round and say to Ausuf ul Dowlah (for such was the title which the young Nabob assumed), "the treaty of Benares was a mere personal arrangement with your father; you can have no right to expect the smallest benefit from it." For though the sovereign of Oude owed allegiance to the Mogul, such allegiance was, and had long been, merely nominal; much more so, indeed, than was that of the English to the Nabobs of Bengal, when they claimed, by virtue of their phirmauns,

the right to occupy Fort William, and waged war against their sovereigns as often as they presumed to question that right.

It may be harsh to assume that the mere circumstance of this view of the case having been adopted by Mr. Hastings was sufficient to influence the majority in the adoption of its opposite. Probably there were other motives at work, but however this may be, the majority came to the conclusion that with the decease of Shujah Dowlah all political connexion between the Company and the state of Oude ceased, and that if he desired its continuance, the new sovereign must be content to negociate upon a basis altogether novel. Now considering that in their first communications to the Court of Directors they had reprobated the Governor-general, on the plea that his single object in concluding the treaty was to bring money into the exhausted treasury at Calcutta,—that they blamed him for the extent of his exactions, and held up to scorn the miserable policy of letting out a portion of the Company's army for hire; the obvious inference for the reader to draw is, that having created for themselves an opportunity of dissolving such a discreditable compact, they would promptly and eagerly take advantage of it; and marching back the brigade within the limits of their own territories, leave the young prince to stand or fall by his own resources. Was such their line

of conduct? Quite the reverse. Knowing that the young Nabob was beset by a complication of difficulties,—aware that, for reasons immediately to be assigned, the withdrawal of their support would tend to his immediate destruction, they directed their agent, Mr. Bristow, to inform him, that unless he consented to increase his monthly subsidy by fifty thousand rupees, they should recall the brigade in one week, and never again permit it to pass his frontier. This was tolerably well for men who both blamed Mr. Hastings for oppressing the Vizier, and affected to hold cheap the subsidy obtained, because it was brought by him to the account of the Company's resources; but their demands did not end there. They recollected that from the province of Benares the King of Oude derived an annual revenue of twenty-two lacs. They felt that such a sum would make a very pleasant addition to the permanent revenues of Bengal, and they boldly required that his sovereign rights over the territories of Cheyt Sing should be made over to them. The young Nabob protested, complained, and mourned his hard fate; but what could he do? As a measure of self-preservation he came into these harsh terms, while the majority took infinite credit to themselves for having largely promoted the interests of the East India Company.

Mr. Hastings, as he had taken up from the first an opposite view of the question, so he entered a

minute, as usual, condemnatory of the proceedings, and wrote home at the same time to explain his views to the Directors, and to warn them against the moral wrong, into the commission of which they were about to be hurried. The Court could not but admit that the Governor's notions were just, yet while indirectly censuring by such admission the proceedings of the majority, they heartily approved of the result, thus exhibiting one more proof to the many which are every where before us, that in popular bodies moral principle is seldom a match for self-interest. Nevertheless, the full amount of wrong into which the Indian Government ran by this transaction, seems scarcely to have been understood at the moment, and is not unlikely now to be forgotten. Let me, therefore, state the merits of the case with all fairness, more especially as the act of doing so will lead me on to a consideration of the second of those points of which I have spoken as having been brought by Shujah Dowlah's death prominently before the Council.

When Shujah Dowlah died, there were considerable sums due from him to the British government on account both of the Rohilla treaty and the monthly subsidy. For these his successor was clearly liable, while the pay of his own army, mustering upwards of one hundred thousand men, was a full twelvemonth in arrear. The native

troops became, as usual, clamorous for their pay, and were with difficulty restrained from breaking out into mutiny, which the Nabob, a weak and indolent prince, found himself without the means of allaying. The father, indeed, had died immensely rich. There were laid up in the zenana, or women's apartments of the palace, treasure to the estimated amount of two millions sterling, the whole of which, according to every principle of right and to the universal law of nations, ought to have come with the crown to Ausuf ul Dowlah. But here the Begum stepped in, and pretending that by will Shujah Dowlah had bequeathed this enormous sum to her, she positively refused to advance to the Nabob one rupee. Had there been common honesty and common vigour in the English government at this moment, much future mischief could have been averted. First of all, Mr. Bristow was bound to demand a sight of the will. He never did this, nor was evidence ever adduced that any document of the kind existed; and secondly, supposing the deed to have been produced, his obvious duty was to inform the Begum that not till the testator's debts have been paid to the last farthing, can any legacy or bequest be claimed under the authority of a will, however regularly executed. In this case, however, all that might be due to the English, all the arrears of pay owing to the army, all outstanding claims for the civil administration of Oude, as well

as the funds necessary to carry on the government for the current year, ought clearly to have come under the head of debts, and to have been out of the accumulations of the deceased provided for; and then, and not till then, the question ought to have been mooted, how far, as a sovereign prince, Shujah Dowlah was entitled to will away, as private property, monies collected from the public taxes, and meant to be applied to the exigencies of the state. For not the least remarkable feature in the case is, that the Begum was otherwise provided for than by the treasures laid up in the zenana. The Vizier had granted to her, in jaghire, a tract of country, which yielded an annual income of several lacs; and of this, not less than of her two millions, she kept firm possession.

It is always difficult, it is often impossible, to trace back, even in a transaction like this, effects to their causes. I have no desire to follow the example of Mr. Francis and his friends, by imagining motives which may have had no existence; but the facts are sufficiently notorious, that Mr. Bristow not only neglected to perform these great and obvious duties towards both his own government and the Nabob of Oude, but that he lent himself at once to the views of the Begum. Indifferent to the great truth—for it seems impossible that he should have failed to perceive it—that the Oude alliance would be profitable to the Company

only in proportion as the reigning prince should be in a condition to maintain order within his own territories, and fulfil his obligations, Mr. Bristow permitted the grossest of all frauds to be practised on Ausuf ul Dowlah, in consequence of which Ausuf ul Dowlah ascended the throne in a state of absolute bankruptcy, out of which there appeared a slender chance that he would ever be able to escape. Nay, nor did the folly and injustice of the proceedings end there. As if it had been resolved to preclude the Nabob from all chance of afterwards retrieving his fortunes,—as if it had been his object to place a bar in the way of inquiry and investigation at any future time, Mr. Bristow took upon himself the office of mediator between the young King and his mother, and prevailed upon the prince, for the paltry consideration of fifty lacs of rupees, to sign a deed, by which the treasures claimed under the [illegible] of Shujah Dowlah were for ever secured to the Begum. For this Mr. Bristow took great credit to himself in his correspondence with the majority, and for this the majority praised him, in the teeth of a solemn protest from Mr. Hastings and Mr. Barwell, both of whom denounced the arrangement as alike impolitic and iniquitous.

The controversies to which the settlement of this affair gave rise had no tendency to smooth down the differences already existing in the Supreme

Council. The passions of the contending parties became, on the contrary, day by day more inflamed, till in the end that which may possibly have been at the outset a sense of public duty, degenerated on the part of the majority into sheer personal rancour. Notice was taken elsewhere of the avidity with which, on first landing, they gave ear to every tale which seemed to militate against the private, not less than the public, character of the Governor. For a while no consequences were seen to follow these secret communications; but the time was now come when Mr. Francis and his friends believed their budget to be complete, and they no longer hesitated to open it. Charges of bribery to an enormous extent, of corruption in the distribution of public employments, of a studied sacrifice of the interests of the Company in order to advance his own private fortunes, of double dealing, and chicanery, and malversation, were all at once brought against Mr. Hastings. Nay more. Mr. Hastings was not only accused to the Directors at home, but was required by the members of his own Council to answer before them for crimes said to have been committed long before they came into office. Now, though I have examined the commission under which they acted, and read with care the letter of instructions which they carried with them to India, I have been unable to discover a sentence, or the fragment of a sentence, from which

it can be so much as inferred that Messrs. Clavering, Monson, and Francis, were meant to erect themselves into a court of inquiry upon the personal proceedings of their chief. Their prescribed duty was, to join heartily with Messrs. Hastings and Barwell in the endeavour to give to the inhabitants of British India the blessings of a good government. If errors were discovered in previous systems, they were required to correct them; neither were they precluded, as individuals, from reporting to the authorities at home any tales, however unfavourable to their colleagues, which might reach them. But in laying themselves out to receive such tales, far more in devoting the greater portion of their time and attention to inquiries connected with them, they went as much beyond the line of their own province as they fell short of what was due to the honour and interests of their employers.

I have had occasion more than once in the course of this narrative to introduce to the reader's notice the names of Maha Rajah Nuncomar, of Mohammed Reza Cawn, of Rajah Goordass, Nuncomar's son, of Munney Begum, the widow of Jaffier Ally Cawn, formerly Nabob of Bengal, and of Maborck ud Dowlah, nominal Nabob of the same province, whose authority came to an end in 1770, when the Company stood forth as the avowed rulers of the dominion which their arms had

acquired. Of Nuncomar enough has been said to prove that he never was regarded, either by Mr. Hastings or by any other of the Company's most distinguished servants, except in the light of a thorough-paced scoundrel. So early as the administration of Mr. Vansittart, indeed, his intrigues were as palpable as their object was dishonest, while in later times he seems never to have been employed under the English government except to the injury of his superiors and the extreme oppression of the people. How Mr. Hastings dealt with him, from the date of his appointment as Governor of Bengal, the correspondence introduced into a former part of this work has shown. No confidence whatever was reposed in him; no employment of honour or responsibility was committed to him; indeed he was uniformly and with studied care kept in the back ground, even while, from motives of policy, his son Goordass was brought forward.

Mohammed Reza Cawn and Nuncomar seem to have been from early youth bitterly at variance. Both of them were of high family, and both endowed with talents of a superior order; they first became rivals for public employment, and then settled down into inveterate personal enemies. Each, moreover, having his own faction among the native gentry and people of consequence, it was esteemed an act of good policy to balance the one against the other, insomuch that when, by ex-

press orders from England, Mr. Hastings put Mohammed Reza Cawn in arrest, he found himself in some measure compelled to draw from the obscurity into which it had fallen, the family of his rival. The reader cannot, however, have forgotten, that to Nuncomar himself, Mr. Hastings never extended his confidence. On the contrary, when Munny Begum was appointed guardian to the young Nabob's person, and Rajah Goordass became Dewan in his household, care was taken to prevent, as far as possible, all communication between the son and his father; the latter being on all occasions represented to the Court of Directors as an intriguing and unprincipled man, who never took part in any matter except for the purpose of promoting his own selfish interests. Among other instances of this man's duplicity, Mr. Hastings, in a letter written in 1772, informs the Court that "Before my departure from Fort St. George, when my appointment to this presidency was known, a messenger, expressly deputed from Munny Begum, came to me there with letters from her, entreating my protection in the most earnest terms, both for her house and for the people of Bengal, against the tyranny of Mohammed Reza Cawn; and referring for further information to Maha Rajah Nuncomar, from whom I received similar addresses on the same subject, and by the same hand. The Munny Begum has since

solemnly disavowed ever having written such letters, or authorized such a communication." A man who was capable of such a fraud as this was not likely to be taken into favour by Mr. Hastings. With the perseverance and cunning of his nation, however, he ceased not to importune for public employment; forging papers, suborning false witnesses, and adopting every conceivable method of obtaining his end; and the steady repulses which he met with from the Governor of Bengal he neither forgot nor forgave.

It was no secret to Mr. Hastings that with Nuncomar among other discontented persons, his rivals in the government had early entered into alliance. With Mohammed Reza Cawn, on the contrary, they refused for a while to communicate, for no other ostensible reason than that Mr. Hastings seemed to think favourably of him. But even this feeling of aversion was seen by degrees to subside, and Mr. Hastings, a good deal to his own surprise, ascertained that through Mohammed Reza Cawn, not less than through Nuncomar, they were seeking to aim a blow at his character. In a word, it came out, by degrees, that these two rivals for power were to be used as instruments wherewith to destroy the good name and undermine the influence of the Governor-general; and if the one proved less pliable than the majority had reason to expect, the other

entered with all his heart into their views, and found more than one ally to sustain him.

On the 6th of March Nuncomar opened the campaign by waiting formally upon Mr. Francis, presenting to him a letter addressed to the Governor-general, and required him to lay it, as a point of duty, before the Board. With this request Mr. Francis judged it expedient to comply, and there was read in consequence, the same day, openly in Council, such a document as, I shrewdly suspect, has never before or since been brought under the notice of a body similarly constituted; for Nuncomar's communication amounted simply to a charge against the Governor-general of direct oppression and fraud to a large extent. It accused him of having connived at all Mohammed Reza Cawn's embezzlements,—embezzlements by the way of which there had never been the slightest proof; it spoke of a bribe of ten lacs of rupees as the true cause of the culprit's unlooked for escape from punishment, and specified other presents to a large amount, which the writer alleged that Mr. Hastings had accepted, either as the price of appointments unworthily bestowed, or as the terms in which delinquencies were passed over and commuted. Mr. Hastings, as might be expected, was full of indignation at the unworthy treatment awarded him. He demanded of Mr. Francis whether he had previously been aware of Nuncomar's design

of thus standing forth as his public accuser; and he extorted from his colleague an avowal, that though ignorant of the precise contents of the letter then read, he knew perfectly, when he received it from the writer's hands, that it was full of heavy charges against the head of the government.

So passed one day in fierce and stormy debate, Mr. Hastings scouting the accusations of such a miscreant as Nuncomar, while at the same time he denied the right of the Council, under any circumstances, to entertain them. Two days subsequently, that is to say, on the next meeting of the Board, a similar scene was enacted. A second letter from Nuncomar was read, in which the writer demanded to be personally heard in support of his previous allegations; and to this demand the majority had the bad taste, as well as the audacity, to accede. Again Mr. Hastings protested against the insult. He had no objection to the majority forming themselves, if they pleased, into a committee of inquiry; but he would not sit as the president of a Council into which the dregs of the community were to be introduced, that they might give evidence, at the dictation of Nuncomar, against his character and conduct. I confess that, in my poor opinion, Mr. Hastings in yielding this yielded too much, and that Mr. Barwell's view of the case, who spoke of the Supreme Court as the proper tribunal before which such questions ought

to be tried, was the right one. But the opinions of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Barwell were treated, as usual, with contempt, and a resolution passed that Nuncomar should be called in and heard. Mr. Hastings would not submit to this. In the exercise of the powers entrusted to him by act of parliament, he declared that the Court was dissolved, and quitting the room, was soon afterwards followed by Mr. Barwell. But what cared the majority for this? They kept their seats; they determined by vote, that the proceedings were irregular, and placing General Clavering in the chair, they desired Nuncomar to be introduced. He came, said much about his own integrity, and his absence of every motive save a sense of right, for the part which he had taken; and ended by producing another letter, on which a new charge against the Governor-general was immediately founded. The letter in question, which purported to be addressed by the Begum to Nuncomar, adverted to Mr. Hastings's kindness to her in setting her over the young Nabob's household, and then went on to state, that she had offered to the Governor, as a mark of her gratitude, one lac of rupees. "The Governor," continued the writer, "said in reply, that he had not acted from motives of private advantage, but for the satisfaction of his employers. I pressed the present urgently upon him, upon which he at last said,

'Very well, if you do think proper to make a present, give two lacs, as Maharajah engaged; otherwise do as you please, you are your own mistress.'" Last of all, after gravely asserting, that two lacs were actually given, one provided in cash by Munny Begum, the other by bills on Nuncomar, the miscreant produced what he called the conclusion of the letter, in these words, "For the future let us take care in the conduct of our affairs, to consult and plan beforehand, that when we are called upon no difference may appear in our representations and answers, and that I may conform to whatever you may say. Let nothing of the secret part of these transactions be known to the Governor or the gentlemen of the Council, or any others. The proverb is, 'a word to the wise.'"

If proof had not been afforded in the result of a comparison of the signature attached to this memorable letter with that which authenticated a communication just received from the Begum by Sir John d'Oyley, that it was not written by the Begum at all, even in this case it seems hard to conceive how the majority could have consented to act upon such information; for whatever else it might prove, the document distinctly showed that there was no species of fraud to which Nuncomar was not prepared to lend himself. For supposing it to be fabricated, then he stood forth

a convicted forger and conspirator; supposing it to be genuine, it placed him in the scarcely less envious light of a participator in the Begum's duplicity. But the Council, as they called themselves, paid to these considerations no regard whatever; they resolved, with one consent, that a sum of three lacs and 40,000 rupees had been clandestinely and illegally received by the Governor-general; and that measures should be taken to compel, without delay, the repayment of the same into the public treasury.

Nuncomar was not, it must be confessed, very scrupulous as to the extent to which he charged the Governor-general with having profited by his habits of chicanery. The sums of money, which, according to his showing, must have passed, in the shape of bribes and presents, into the coffers of this rapacious functionary, will be found, when added together, to exceed by far the largest amount of property of which Mr. Hastings ever stood possessed. Yet Nuncomar was not the sole witness who bore testimony to the rapacious venality of this venal man. The Rannee of Burdwan, with her adopted son Ram Kasheen; Rodachurn Roy, a vakeel or agent of the young Nabob of Bengal; Caumul o' Dien, the farmer of an extensive portion of the revenues; and last not least, three English gentlemen, Mr. Grant, accountant to the provincial council of Moorshedabad, and the two

Messrs. Fowkes, all came forward and laid to the Governor's door charges of most extortionate corruption. Of the motives which may have swayed the last mentioned of these personages, it is unnecessary for me to speak. They are sufficiently commented upon in the portions of correspondence which it will by and bye be my business to transcribe. But much that remains to be told will be without meaning to the general reader, if I fail to take notice of the other actors in the play, though my notice must of course be brief, and the issue imperfect.

With respect to the Rannee of Burdwan, it may be sufficient to observe, that she was the widow of one Tillook Chund, who, with the title of Rajah, had owned the zemindary of the district, as indeed his ancestors had done throughout the entire period of the Mohammedan sway. This woman, having been left guardian by the Rajah to his adopted son, a youth at the time of her husband's decease of nine years old, had acted as zemindar till the commencement of the five years' settlement, when Mr. Hastings, dissatisfied with her system of administration, set her aside, and gave the control over the revenues to one Delul Roy, by whom they had ever since been farmed. Mr. Hastings did not, however, leave either the Rannee or her son in a state of indigence. An ample pension, on the contrary,

was allowed them, more than adequate to defray all the expenses of their condition; and with this, after various ineffectual endeavours to recover her political influence, the Rannee appeared to be content. But no sooner was she made acquainted with the state of things at Calcutta, than she hastened to add herself to the list of the Governor-general's accusers, being well aware that she could adopt no surer method of ingratiating herself into the good will of the majority, and thus, through them, accomplishing the great object of her ambition.

The Rannee's intrigues appear to have begun so early as the month of December, 1774; at which time she wrote to accuse both the Dewan and the British resident of gross corruption; but it was not till the success of Nuncomar's devices spread abroad, that she openly took the field against the Governor-general. Then, however, she too entered the lists, bringing charges against both him and his banyan, or native secretary, that the one had accepted a present of 15,000, the other of 4,500 rupees, as the price of their connivance at Mr. Baber's more extensive corruption. Nevertheless, neither she nor her agents seem to have acted, in this respect, on the dictates of their own free and unfettered judgment. She was willing enough to plot for the recovery of her lost honour, she was not quite so willing to commit herself in a struggle with Mr. Hastings, till

certain influences were called into play, and her scruples melted before them. On this point, too, the correspondence, by and bye to be inserted, will throw a strong and a curious light.

Of Caumul o' Dien, I have nothing to say, except that he appears to have been a tool in the hands of persons more designing than himself; neither does Rodachurn Roy seem to have played a higher part. Yet the proceedings of both were not less curious than the issues in which they resulted were remarkable.

Again as time passed onwards, and the designs of the majority became more and more apparent, fresh accusers were induced to stand forth against Mr. Hastings, all of whom were caressed, flattered, and rewarded, in exact proportion to the weight of the charges which they brought against the Governor-general. Thus on the 30th of March a new crime was laid to the door of Mr. Hastings, that he had appropriated to his own use not less than two-thirds of the salary allowed to the Phousdar of Hoogley. It was a heavy charge, it rested only on the testimony of an obscure native, it was never brought home to the party accused; yet of it, and of the Governor, the majority did not scruple to write in the following terms. "In the late proceedings of the revenue board, it will appear that there is no species of peculation from which the Honourable Governor-general has

thought it reasonable to abstain. We believe the proofs of his having appropriated four parts in seven of the salary, with which the Company is charged for the Phousdar of Hoogley, are such as, whether sufficient or not to convict him in a court of justice, will not leave the shadow of a doubt concerning his guilt in the mind of any unprejudiced person." This is a bold assertion, yet it falls infinitely short of another, which I find introduced into the same despatch—I mean the minute drawn up by Messrs. Clavering, Monson, and Francis, bearing date the 11th of April, 1775, when, speaking of Nuncomar, and felicitating themselves on the able assistance which he had afforded them, they say, "Whatever might have been his motives, his discoveries have thrown a clear light upon the Honourable Governor-general's conduct, and the means he had taken of making the very large fortune which he is said to possess, of upwards of forty lacs of rupees, which he must have amassed in two years and a half." Forty lacs of rupees, computed by our legalized standard, would amount to something more than £400,000. The expenses of Mr. Hastings's trial, though they fell short of £100,000, and did not come upon him till after he had been thirteen years in office, left him without the means of supporting, with decency, his place in English society as a gentleman!!!

Matters had proceeded thus far, when a new light broke in upon Mr. Hastings, and he who had heretofore acted solely on the defensive found himself all at once in a condition to turn the tables on his accusers. Having evidence unexpectedly supplied, he instituted proceedings in the Supreme Court for a conspiracy against the whole of the majority's agents, namely, Mr. Fowke, Nuncomar, Rodachurn, and others; and though not quite so successful as at the outset he had reason to expect, the result of the prosecution was to throw absolute discredit on the veracity of the accused. How all this was done, will best appear from a perusal of the following letters, a very small portion of the correspondence which he carried on at the time, and of which the bulk is in my possession.

To LAURENCE SULIVAN, Esq.

Fort William, 25th February, 1775.

Dear Sir,—I have sent to Graham and Mac Leane a load of papers, and these must supply the place of a longer letter. If you cannot aid me in my present warfare, it will be a point still gained of great moment to me, if the perusal of these materials shall convince you that I have no way merited the malevolent attacks which have been made on my reputation by the new members of the new Council. I am sure they will, and, if truth and reason are heard, I am positive that both will loudly proclaim my integrity, my fidelity, and successful vigilance for the welfare of the Company and the national honour. These men began their opposition on the second day of our meeting. The symptoms of

it betrayed themselves on the very first. They condemned me before they could have read any part of the proceedings; and all the study of the public records since, all the informations they have raked up out of the dirt of Calcutta, and the encouragement given to the greatest villains in the province, are for the sole purpose of finding grounds to vilify my character, and undo all the labours of my government.

Surely it was not for this that the old servants of the Company were dismissed and the new Council formed with such great and extensive powers, to be spent only in defamation and mutual contention.

Nund Comar, whom I have thus long protected and supported, whom, against my nature, I have cherished like a serpent till he has stung me, is now in close connexion with my adversaries, and the prime mover of all their intrigues, and he will sting them too, or I am mistaken, before he quits them. I have expelled him from my gates, and while I live will never re-admit him; yet I will support his son, and the arrangements formed at the city, till the Company's orders empower us to dissolve them. I hear that this also is intended by the majority, and at his instigation.

I have written to Mr. Harrison to solicit his support in the Direction. I think I have heard you mention him as your friend; if he is, may I entreat you to join my request that he will take some pains to become master of the subjects of the present contest. I want only that they be read and known. My opponents, I am persuaded, hope only that they will not be read.

I can write no more, but remember me ever, my dear Sir, your sincere and affectionate friend.

The following to Lord North is extremely curious, not only because it furnishes a complete vindication of Mr. Hastings's conduct in reference

to his correspondence with Mr. Middleton, but because it gives us an insight into one of those vast schemes, which even thus early in his administration of the affairs of British India the writer had begun to mature. Might not his views have come to the knowledge of individuals among the Directors, and may we not attribute to their jealousy some portion, at least, of the hostility which the Court so strangely displayed towards the man who was devoting his time and great talents to their service? I confess that I am not competent to determine how far his vision was attainable, but I am sure that it was such as would enter into a great mind only.

To Lord North.

Fort William, 26th February, 1775.

My Lord,—This letter will be delivered into your Lordship's hands by Mr. Mac Leane, to whom I have sent a complete and literal copy of my correspondence with Mr. Nathaniel Middleton, the late resident on the part of this Government at the court of the late Nabob Shuja Dowla, with a request that he will leave it with your Lordship, if you shall think proper to receive it. I mean, my Lord, no more by this proviso than to avoid intruding a load of papers on your Lordship's attention which you may esteem of too little importance to merit it. I have declared to your Lordship my intention of offering these letters for your inspection, in vindication of my own character from the suggestions occasioned by my refusal to expose them to the view of the new Council. Perhaps, in this endeavour to exculpate myself from a criminal imputation, I may make myself

appear to your Lordship's judgment guilty of indiscretion. I freely confess that I think there is room for such a charge. At the time in which I wrote the letter to Mr. Middleton, to which this reflection directly alludes, I had no suspicion of a possible event ever taking place which should oblige me to reveal it to any person. It was written in a spirit of unbounded confidence in the honour of the person to whom it was addressed, and without any guard on the expression, or other aim in the style, than to make it brief and intelligible. There is one passage in it relative to my own situation, which I almost blush to read at this time, because it bears the appearance of a vain display of consequence, although calculated with a very different view, and, in fact, such as I deemed necessary from an intimate knowledge of the character of the man to whom it was ultimately directed.

I am and have always been of opinion that, whatever form it may be necessary to give to the British dominion in India, nothing can so effectually contribute to perpetuate its duration as to bind the powers and states with whom this Government may be united, in ties of direct dependence and communication with the Crown. This system has been adopted with respect to the Nabob of Arcot, and, I believe, has met with national approbation. I thought it might be adopted with the same success in regard to the powers on this side of India. Their confidence would be strengthened by such a relation, which would free them from the dread of annual changes, and of the influence of individuals; and their submission, which is now the painful effort of a necessary policy, would be yielded with pride by men who glory in the external show of veneration to majesty, and even feel the respect which they profess where they entertain an idea of the power to command it.

In these ideas I was desirous of introducing to a direct communication with the Crown a prince of so much power and consequence as the late Vizier, and whose interests were interwoven with those of our nation. But it was not consistent with my sense of the duty which I owed to the Company, to propose or encourage such a design while they were involved in distress in England, and while their rights and pretensions in this country were in litigation with those of the Crown before parliament. To have in any degree withdrawn from their immediate dependence any of the powers who formerly looked up to them alone as the representatives of the British nation, might have been construed a surrender of their rights, and an injury to their cause. As soon as the legislature had decided on this question, my line was clear. I conceive that the late Act of Parliament, by admitting the King into a participation in the management of all the Company's affairs, and almost the sole control of their political concerns, of course makes him the principal in them, and entitles him to those pledges of obedience and vassalage, from the dependents of the British empire in India, which the ideas of the people and immemorial usage have consecrated to royalty.

These, my Lord, were the principles which influenced me in the proposal contained in my cyphered letter to Mr. Middleton, dated the 26th of August. Whether in this instance my zeal for the honour of my sovereign, and what I deem the good of my nation, may not have been too officious, I will not pretend to determine. I hope not. It may be thought that I should have represented my ideas to my superiors, and waited for instructions; but neither was this a subject which could admit of a reference, and the occasion was too fair in the circumstances of the Vizier at that time, to let it escape me. He is now gone, and the design with him.

If, however, the plan is approved of establishing a direct connexion between the Crown and the Indian powers, the Nabob of Oude will be the principal object, and may be easily included in it.

I think it necessary to add, that the transcript of my correspondence, which attends your orders, was written by Mr. Nathaniel Middleton entirely in his own hand, and is attested by him. It contains every letter which passed between us, from the time of his appointment to the day of his recall. They will do him credit if your Lordship shall have the curiosity to peruse them, in whatever light I may appear; and in that respect I shall feel a satisfaction in having been compelled to bring him before your Lordship's notice. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most faithful servant.

To JOHN GRAHAM, Esq.

Fort William, 25th March, 1775.

My dear Sir,—The following anecdotes are worth your preserving. You may have a good occasion hereafter to have recourse to them.

You may imagine that the Ranny Bowanny would not miss so fine an opportunity of reviving her complaints and pretensions. Nundulol Roy was sent down for this purpose. After him Ram Kishen, the Ranny's adopted son, came down, and Deleel Roy, the farmer, terrified by these appearances, followed him. Baber wrote me a letter on the occasion, which contained so lively a picture of the disordered state of Rajeshahee from these migrations that I laid it before the Board, and desired them to order Ram Kishen and Deleel Roy to return to Murshedabad. They did so. Deleel Roy went back, and Ram Kishen, after some impertinent expostulation, left Calcutta, and remains somewhere near Hugley, from which place he

wrote an humble petition for leave to return to Calcutta. It was refused.

In the mean time Nundoolol, the Vackeels, and Ram Kishen were severally urged to produce informations against me and others. Nundoolol himself assured me that Colonel Monson told him in plain terms that if he wished to succeed in his mistress's application, he must give a Beraumut. This he says happened about thirty days past, and he has not been near the colonel since, but emissaries are daily with him, pressing him with threats and promises to become my accuser. He assures me that he has employed all his influence with Ram Kishen, and will continue to do so, to dissuade him from engaging in so dirty a business, but that the young man (who is but a species of scoundrel himself) has so many villains about him, that he fears his arguments will have no effect. If they have not, he declares he will quit the Ranny's service, and have no more to say to her.

If they fall in with the overtures made them, as I expect they will, the Ranny will be reinstated in her farm, have kellats and honours publicly bestowed on her, and a new prosecution will be commenced in the Supreme Court, from which I cannot suppose that I shall be exempted.

If they persist in declining a Beraumat, the proceedings of the late Council will be confirmed, and Deleel Roy continued in his farm.

I will at any time venture to yield to the spirit of prophecy where I have such good materials to ensure its accomplishment. As either event hereafter turns out, remember the motive which I now ascribe it to, and let both speak for themselves. I do not imagine they will go so far as to set aside the eventual succession in favour of Ram Kishen, but it is possible, and he would go to the devil on such an invitation.

Some time ago I was told that Nund Comar had sent his son a draft of a letter to be written by the Nabob to the Board requiring to be put in full charge over his own affairs, and to be freed from the oppressive guardianship of Munny Begum. Juggutchund had before told me that the General asked him what was the Nabob's age, and why he was not as capable of managing his own affairs as the Begum. Spelling both informations together, I thought it probable that there was a project for depriving the Begum of her authority; and as I was morally certain that such a letter if written would produce the effect intended by it, and that the Nabob was impatient to be out of pupilage, I have advised the Begum to accommodate matters with the Nabob and Bubboo Begum as well as she can; to suffer him to write the letter, and, if it succeeds, to dismiss Goordas and his dependents, and appoint a Dewan and Sersihtadars in whom he can confide. The project is rather too fine to succeed, but I cannot devise a better, unless the arch scoundrel outwits himself, which is not improbable, as the Nabob has discovered that he has agents with Meer Sydoo, and has expressed a suspicion that Nund Comar has formed the wise scheme of raising him to the Nizamut. His people have told him so, for they all hate and dread the power of Nund Comar.

I do not venture to prophesy what will be the issue of this business, but that if the Nabob makes the application in consequence of Nund Comar's advice, and says he is a man, the majority will say so too, and dispossess the Begum. Nund Comar, supported by the powers of government, is not so easily to be dispossessed.

For other matters I refer you to your correspondents.

It is well that this year's despatches are at an end, for I begin to flag, as you will perceive by my letters

to the Court of Directors by this packet. How I am to work through the fatigues of another year God knows. Neglect no opportunity of writing to me. Take care of my papers.

God bless you, my dear friend. Believe me ever most affectionately and heartily yours.

Patton may be useful to you, and I know him to be heartily attached to me, that he will gladly take any part in my cause that you will assign him.

To Mr. GRAHAM and Colonel MACLEANE.

Fort William, 25th March, 1775.

The papers which I enclose with this contain all the material occurrences which have happened since the last despatch. I recommend them to your attentive perusal, and to your care. Your own judgment will direct you to any present use which may be made of them. I may have occasion to appeal to them myself hereafter.

So much depends on the accidental current of popular opinion, that I am doubtful of the effects which may be produced by the new mode of attack which my adversaries have taken up against me. I trust to your friendship and abilities for averting and obviating the end which it is manifestly calculated to effect, I mean a diversion of the public attention from the conduct of my opponents to my own in respect to measures which have long ago received the most complete approval, and of which the memory is now almost obliterated. The violation of the engagements of the former government with the Nabob Shujah Dowla, with the other correspondent acts of frenzy which began their administration, and the total stagnation of business during the last six months, except the very little which they have allowed me to do myself at the Revenue Board, are neither removed nor amended by any transactions of mine in the year 1772. I

solemnly declare that I do not recollect a single act of theirs which was capable of producing any useful purpose, and scarce one independent of me of which I was not the real object. I think our rulers at home have too much understanding to be the dupes of their malice, or to trust the management of this valuable country to men whose behaviour has been marked with so much design, ill temper, and ignorance.

You will find the instructions given to Bristow for the new treaty with the Nabob of Oude less inconsistent than their beginning promised, but you will meet, even in these, the strong prejudices of party. I fear the conclusion will not prove of much advantage. I expect as little profit from the negociations of the successor of Nat Middleton, as I do faith or wisdom from the successor of Shujah Dowla. You will meet with a letter from the new minister, copied by mistake in the public considerations of the 20th. It is his first, and worthy those whose representative he is

You may remember the suspicions which were expressed in the first orders of the Council to Champion, and the precautions which they enjoined him to take, lest the Vizier should attempt to destroy our army by treachery. We have been lately amused by the information of such a plot said to have been formed by the young Nabob, but without the smallest shadow of a foundation to support it. The people have catched the characters of the new rulers of this province and apply them to their own purposes in every way.

In the proceedings of the majority on the 14th the examinations of Gopee Barroll and Diaram Barroll deserve your attention. Had they been questioned by fair examiners, I have no doubt that they would have contradicted one another in every reply. I have taken notice, in my letter to the Court of Directors, of the extraordinary procedure of these gentlemen in

compelling Bridjoo Kichore to accuse himself on oath, and convicting him on the answers thus extorted from him, which they call acknowledging his misconduct. I am told that he persisted for near two hours in the refusal to swear. Nund Comar, who was examined the day before as an accuser, neither swore nor was required to swear.

The letter produced by Nund Comar as Munny Begum's is a gross forgery. I make no doubt of proving it. It bears most evident symptoms of it in the long tattling story told with such injunctions of secrecy, and a word to the wise pertinently added to the end of it, when the sole purpose of the letter was to order the payment of a lac of rupees, and Nund Comar's son and son-in-law were with the Begum and daily informing him of all that passed.

The resolution taken by me to dissolve the meetings of the Board (or rather to declare them dissolved) on the 13th, 14th and 17th of this month, and the orders given by me to Contoo to disobey their summons, will, I hope, be thought as regular as justified by the occasion. I do not recollect an instance of the Council being called, or continued, without the President's authority; not even in the contests of Mr. Vansittart's government. As to an adjournment, the term is nonsense applied to a permanent body like the Council of Calcutta, which must meet twice a week, and may daily, or as often as the governor chooses to assemble them.

Right or wrong, I had no alternative but to do that or throw up the service. Indeed I consider this as a case which supersedes all forms. Their violence had already carried them to lengths which no rules of the service would allow or justify, nor could I yield without inverting the order of it, and submitting to a degradation to which no power or consideration on earth

could have impelled me. I beg you not to pass unnoticed the disadvantages to which I am exposed in being obliged to repell their concerted attacks by unpremeditated resolutions extorted from me in the midst of provocations, the most likely to warp and disorder both my judgment and understanding. I thank God I have hitherto possessed both undisturbed, at least I think so.

I shall continue the practice which I have begun of dissolving the meetings of the Council, that is, of leaving them to themselves, as often as they propose new indignities for me. Indeed, I expect to be able to do very little with them, and how the public business is to be conducted I cannot devise.

The trumpet has been sounded, and the whole host of informers will soon crowd to Calcutta with their complaints and ready depositions. Nund Comar holds his durbar in complete state, sends for zemindars and their vackeels, coaxing and threatening them for complaints, which no doubt he will get in abundance, besides what he forges himself. The system which they have laid down for conducting their affairs is, as I am told, after this manner. The General rummages the Consultations for disputable matter with the aid of old Fowke. Colonel Monson receives, and I have been assured descends even to solicit, accusations. Francis writes. Goring is employed as their agent with Mahommed Reza Cawn; and Fowke with Nund Comar. I believe you both knew before you left Calcutta that it was reported and currently believed that I had been many days in close counsel with Nund Comar before the arrival of the transports, and carried down with him a long list of malversations to present to the new members. I suppose it is the same with that which Nund Comar himself has since presented.

Was it for this that the Legislature of Great Britain

formed the new system of Government for Bengal, and armed it with powers extending to every part of the British empire in India?

Colonel Monson, with a more guarded temper, and a more regular conduct, now appears to be the most determined of the three. The rudeness of General Clavering, and the petulancy of Francis, are more provoking, but it is from the former only that I apprehend any effectual injury. I therefore retract the exception which I before made with respect to him. I cannot temporize; and after two years of anguish, I will either retain my seat in comfort, or I will not keep it. I never can be on terms of ease with these men.

I have sent you copies of the proceedings relating to the fees and salaries of the officers of the Supreme Court, lest you should hear my conduct called in question about them, for every act of mine assimilates with these men into criminality. I am, with the sincerest and heartiest regard, Gentlemen, your faithful friend and most obedient servant.

To Lord North.

Fort William, 27th March, 1775.

My Lord,—I have too great a respect for your Lordship's time to attempt to occupy much of it with matters so personal as those which constitute the present disputes between me and my opponents in the Council of this establishment; but my duty impels me to offer my opinion of their immediate effects, and of the necessity of a speedy decision upon them.

Your Lordship will have perceived, that in the endeavours of General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Mr. Francis, to condemn the measures of the late administration, and in the pains taken to attribute them wholly to myself, their aim was to destroy my credit at home, while all their public measures served

to proclaim the annihilation of my power abroad. To effect both purposes in the most complete manner, agents, chosen from the basest of the people—and none but the basest would have undertaken such an office—have been excited to bring accusations against me of receiving presents in the course of my former government. These accusations, true or false, have no relation to the measures which are the ground and subject of our original differences; but my opponents undoubtedly expect, that if they can succeed to lower my private character in the opinion of the world, the rectitude and propriety of my public conduct will be overlooked, and that their credit will rise in proportion as mine is debased. How far with the people, who are ever prone to receive allegations for proof, and to suppose that everything must be criminal which is delivered as a charge, they may prevail to raise a clamour against me till the truth be fairly known, I cannot pretend to foresee, but I am confident they will not succeed with your Lordship, or those who are to be the effectual judges between us. On the contrary, if it shall appear that my measures have never been influenced by interested views, but have been uniformly dictated by a solicitude for the improvement of the country and the prosperity of the Company; and if it has been unanswerably proved (as I flatter myself it has) that their affairs are in an infinitely more flourishing condition at present than they were at the commencement of my administration, I am satisfied that your Lordship will do me justice, and allow me still to retain that share in your esteem with which you have hitherto honoured me, and which it is my greatest ambition to merit.

The dark and illiberal manner in which these charges have been introduced, and the violence and intemperance with which they have been supported, will, if

ever they come officially before your notice, for it would be rudeness in me to obtrude such a load upon it, speak more plainly the designs and characters of my adversaries than any conclusions of mine upon them.

It surely was foreign from your Lordship's intention in establishing the new system of government for these provinces, and in obtaining for it such great and extended powers, that they should be wholly exerted in acts of personal hostility against a mere individual, whose removal required less even than a positive Act of the Legislature to effect it.' If I might presume to conjecture the design of that wisdom which projected this plan, I should be led to conclude that it was formed only to introduce, by an easy gradation, a more perfect constitution, to which a temporary combination both of the powers and agents of the former with those deriving their first existence from the government itself, would naturally contribute, and preclude the necessity of a more instant revolution, the shock of which might endanger the national interests in this country. If such were your Lordship's views, if such was the object of the legislature, as is apparently suggested by an Act formed for so short a duration, nothing could so effectually promote it as a cordial union of the new members of the temporary administration; as, on the other hand, their mutual contests, and the stagnation of all public business, inseparable from the divisions of those on whom its currency depends, are the most infallible means of rendering it abortive. Indeed, I have been told, your Lordship knows with what truth, that it was your strict injunctions to the gentlemen of whose behaviour I complain, to cultivate a good understanding with me, and to shun every occasion of personal animosity; and I can with a safe conscience affirm that I made advances even beyond the line of my station, to prepare them

for a temper so necessary for the public good. But their indisposition manifested itself on the moment of their landing, and has progressively displayed itself to this time in such reiterated acts of deliberate and wanton persecution, as no period of time in the records of this government can equal. I early foresaw a part of the evils which were preparing for me; but the assurances given me by your Lordship, and the flattering distinction with which you had been pleased to honour me, outweighed every consideration of my own ease or convenience, and fixed me in the determination to stand the event, and to wait for the remedy which your Lordship's justice might prescribe, whatever troubles might be destined to fill up the long interval of my time before I could receive the benefit of it.

I now most earnestly entreat that your Lordship—for on you, I presume, it finally rests—will free me from the state I am in, either by my immediate recall, or by the confirmation of the trust and authority of which you have hitherto thought me deserving, on such a footing as shall enable me to fulfil your expectations, and to discharge the debt which I owe to your Lordship, to my country, and my Sovereign

The meanest drudge, who owes his daily subsistence to daily labour, enjoys a condition of happiness compared to mine, while I am doomed to share the responsibility of measures which I disapprove, and to be an idle spectator of the ruin which I cannot avert.

The following deserves the reader's marked attention, and I therefore entreat him to observe the date, and to compare it with that of another letter which he will find a few pages further on. It used to be urged as a heavy charge against Mr. Hastings's integrity, that after authorizing his

agent, Colonel MacLeane, to resign, in his name, the Government of Bengal, he disavowed the act, so soon as the death of one of the opposite faction gave him a majority in the Council, and continued to wield a power which did not belong to him. I apprehend that no one, after perusing the subjoined correspondence, will ever think of repeating the charge.

Fort William, 27th March, 1775.

My dear Graham,—I think it necessary to give both you and Colonel MacLeane this separate notice, lest you should be at a distance from each other when the packet arrives, of a resolution which I have formed, to leave this place, and return to England on the first ship of the next season, if the first advices from England contain a disapprobation of the treaty of Benares, or of the Rohilla war, and mark an evident disinclination towards me. In that case I can have nothing to hope, and shall consider myself at liberty to quit this hateful scene before my enemies gain their complete triumph over me.

If, on the contrary, my conduct is commended, and I read in the general letters clear symptoms of a proper disposition towards me, I will wait the issue of my appeals.

I have imparted this resolution to no other person on your side of the water, and I leave it to your discretion and MacLeane's to make such use of it as you think proper. I shall certainly contrive to stop at the Cape for the sake of intelligence. Once more adieu, your truly affectionate friend.

A more curious document than the following has rarely taken its place in authentic history.

The light is now breaking in upon the writer, of which I have elsewhere spoken; and his resolutions how to steer by it are taken boldly, but with due deliberation.

To Messrs. GRAHAM and MACLEANE.

Fort William, 29th April, 1775.

My dear friends,—I trust to chance for the conveyance of these despatches to your hands. They contain the detail of a most extraordinary event, which will serve as a clue to the discovery of the most base and infamous artifices which have been practised to ruin my character and fortune, and with mine those of every man connected with me I beg you will read them with attention. I do not wish you to make any other use of them but to refute any false reports which may have found their way to England of this affair, or to obtain a suspension of the public decision on the late appeals if the shameless malice of my adversaries shall, beyond my expectation, have prevailed to gain the credit of those who are to be our judges against me.

Mr. Graham knows the character of Cumil O' Din, I do not; but do not suppose that he is possessed of a preternatural spirit of constancy or of integrity. I can hardly expect, therefore, that he will hold out to the next assizes. Like every other farmer he has his whole fortune and future prospects involved in his farm. This lays him at the absolute mercy of the majority, who have only to encourage or invite complaints against him, and order mofussel inquiries into his conduct. Mr. Graham knows how effectually this will ruin him without even their interposition, which I am certain will not be withheld. With the arts of intimidation and caresses alternately practised upon him, with his own fears and interests strongly operating

upon him, and the armed hand of power held for ever over his head, I think it almost impossible for him to stand firm to the truth against so many incentives to desert it, and no very great hazard if he suppresses or varies his evidence at the trial. You may depend upon the depositions for literal copies of those in the chief justice's possession. The judges first refused to let them be copied, or even notes taken from them. They have since granted that licence which I have but in common with the other parties. The contradictions in Fowke's and Nundcomar's account of the affair, and in their own evidences examined upon it, are all of the most essential kind; not the errors of memory, but the direct opposition of facts which could not be affirmed with truth without the certainty of recollection. For Fowke's defence I have the joint recollection of George Vansittart, Durham, and Elliott, added to my own. Mr. Graham will well remember Yar Mahmud.

When Cumil O' Din first came to me with his complaint, I heard him attentively. I cautioned him against a false accusation, of which I represented to him all the consequences. I questioned him closely, for I doubted the fact. He answered me so consistently and steadily that I was persuaded, and then referred his complaint to the chief justice After the examination I sent for him to Belvidere (having had the precaution to ask the judges if I could do it with propriety) on the 23d. I told him that if his charges were false, it would be impossible to conceal it from the penetration of the judges, the jurymen, and the assistants, by whom he would be closely questioned on every minute fact and circumstance; that the consequence of his being proved guilty of a perjury would be infamy and irretrievable ruin: I conjured him therefore by God and his conscience, Khodaw-kawasty and Desham-kawasty, not to involve himself in de-

struction, nor draw me into the prosecution of an innocent man—(innocent I mean of the zerd, for I was clear as to the arzee.) I entreated him to tell me fairly and candidly the whole truth, I promised him both pardon and my future support if he would reveal the real facts, even though it should appear from them that he had endeavoured to injure me, as the greatest injury which he could do me was to deceive me on this occasion. In answer, he affirmed, with the most solemn asseverations, that he had related nothing but the strictest truth; he repeated the story, and again repeated it with variations in little circumstances, and in the mode of relating it, but with a strong and undeviating consistency in every material point. He said it was impossible for him to call witnesses to what passed in Fowke's chamber, where he stood alone in the midst of his enemies, but he would persist to his death in what he had affirmed, and relied even on the depositions of Mr. Fowke's own servants for the confirmation of enough of it to serve as a presumptive evidence of the rest. He returned the next day of his own accord to confirm the same declarations. I accordingly resolved on the prosecution, and in my heart and conscience I believe both Fowke and Nundcomar to be guilty. It is not possible for a man to prefer an accusation with a cheerful and contented mind, and without any change of circumstances, without a change of place, or a friend to advise with, to repent in an hour's time, and solicit with such eagerness as he is described to retract it. It is impossible it could have been sealed both at his own house and at Fowke's. It is impossible that he could have begged, and entreated and fallen at Mr. Fowke's feet, that Mr. Fowke should have threatened to knock him down with a great folio, and that three men who were all the time present or within hearing, should have seen nothing but cheerfulness, content, and com-

posure between them. It is incontestably proved that Nundcomar dictated, at least by his own confession in part, the arzee. It is avowed by Fowke that Cumal O' Din demanded it back, and refused his consent to present it to the Board, that he showed such a repugnancy to it as amounted to a conviction of the falsehood of the accusation; yet Mr. Fowke did present it to the Council without the slightest intimation of its being his own act and deed, in contradiction to the will and entreaty of the man whom he named my accuser. He solemnly denied having any knowledge of the zerd, yet in the same breath he as solemnly called upon Mr. Barwell to deny on his oath the truth of it,—the truth of a charge which he himself affirmed had no existence.

He has a long time now before him to patch up all these contradictions, for I understand the assizes will not be held before the 15th of June; but whatever be the issue of it, I shall fix my judgment on the evidence given without premeditation, and shall carry to the grave the firm and immovable belief that these men are the retained instruments of a faction to excite and to forge accusations against me for the purpose of working their triumph on my ruin.

I have but this instant read (though it has been some days in my possession) a second letter written by the majority to the Court of Directors by the Anson. I have not time to answer it, for I have not an hour left to close these despatches: but I cannot forbear to express my astonishment at the effrontery with which they affirm, that the whole country joins in their condemnation of my conduct, and in representing me as a monster of iniquity, and guilty of every species of enormity. There are many gentlemen in England who have been eye-witnesses of my conduct. For God's sake call upon them to draw my true portrait,

for the devil is not so black as these fellows have painted me. There are thousands in England who have correspondents in Bengal. I wish it were possible to collect testimonies from these. If I am not deceived, there is not a man in Calcutta, scarce in Bengal, unconnected with Clavering and his associates, who does not execrate their conduct, and unite in wishes for my success against them. Once more, my good and valued friends, adieu. God send this safe and speedily to your hands.

The consequence of this discovery was, that Mr. Hastings, after well weighing the matter, proceeded to seek for redress at the hands of the judges of the Supreme Court, who, on the 12th of April, caused the parties implicated to be brought before them, and went into a long and patient examination of the whole case. It appeared to them so full of suspicion, that Nuncomar, Mr. Fowke, and their associates, were required to give security that they would appear at the next assizes, and take their trial, while Mr. Hastings was in like manner bound over to prosecute for a conspiracy. Yet such was the temper of the majority, that they chose this very season to make a formal visit of honour to Nuncomar, a compliment which not only they themselves had never before paid him, but which he had never received at the hands of any previous administration. A more flagrantly indecent act has seldom, I venture to say, been perpetrated by any men in office. But their indecencies were far from ending there.

Nuncomar was held to bail on the 19th of April. On the 20th the majority waited upon him, as has been described; giving, by that act, the best assurance that he had lost no ground in their favour, and holding out encouragement for others to follow in his footsteps. The encouragement was not offered in vain. Within the space of a few days many fresh charges were brought against Mr. Hastings, one of which made him a party in the misapplication, by the Begum, of the funds allowed by the Company for the maintenance of the Nabob's dignity. Now, let it be borne in mind, that the Begum, by denying the authenticity of the letter which Nuncomar had presented as hers, placed herself at once in opposition both to him and to his patrons. It became an object, therefore, with them to blacken her character as much as they were seeking to blacken that of the Governor-general; and the following was the expedient adopted for the purpose of proving that she and the Governor were old confederates in crime.

On the 2d of May, Mr. Grant, accountant to the provincial council of Moorshedabad, produced before the Board a set of accounts, stating that he had received them from a clerk in his own office, who had formerly been in the service of the Begum. The accounts in question professed to extend over a period of ten years. They were kept in the Persian language, and showed a deficiency of expen-

diture in the household, as compared with the stipends received, of nearly nine hundred and sixty-seven thousand, or, in gross numbers, ten lacs of rupees. Now, supposing the accounts to have been genuine, what then? So long as the Nabob's education was rightly attended to, his debts paid, and the expenses of his household covered, of what moral crime could the Begum be considered guilty, because she contrived to save, year by year, one lac out of sixteen?' An unprejudiced observer would be apt to imagine that she deserved praise for the exercise of a virtue very little recognised either then or now in the families of eastern princes; but the majority in the Council thought differently. It was immediately assumed that the ten lacs must have been expended in bribes and presents to Mr. Hastings and his friends; and a resolution was passed, that strict inquiry should be made into the whole of the Begum's financial proceedings. Moreover, the majority determined to carry on this inquiry through a commissioner sent expressly for the purpose; and they nominated Mr. Goring, a protégé of their own, to fulfil the invidious task.

While these things went on in Council, an event befel elsewhere, which led both immediately and remotely to very serious consequences. Nuncomar was arrested on a charge of forgery, exhibited against him by a native merchant in Calcutta, and committed to prison. The committal took place on

the 6th; on the 9th the majority, by a stroke of the pen, removed the Begum from her office, and nominated Rajah Goordass, Nuncomar's son, to act in her stead. This was indeed a bold proceeding; the very consummation of all their atrocities. Without so much as waiting to ascertain whether any or what amount of criminality attached to her, they deprived of all influence, and subjected to the grossest humiliation, a lady whom the Court of Directors had especially appointed to be head of the Nabob's family; and advanced to that high station the son of a man, not only lying under the odium of a threatened prosecution for conspiracy, but awaiting, in the common jail, his trial for a capital offence. It seems difficult to conceive how personal rancour, or the spirit of faction, could go further.

After having called the reader's attention to such strong facts as these, it would be idle to speak in detail of the many lesser annoyances to which, from day to day, the object of this party spleen was subjected. Mr. Hastings's confidential banyan, or native secretary, for example, had been in the occupation of certain farms ere he came into Mr. Hastings's service; and his master had neither required him to vacate them nor interfered violently to prevent his hiring others. Mr. Hastings's forbearance in these respects was declared to be criminal, because, forsooth, there was a regulation which prohibited the servants and dependants of *collectors* from be-

coming themselves renters of land.But Mr. Hastings was no *collector*. He had nothing to do with the collection of the revenue in any shape, except by taking care, as the head of the government, that justice was done to all parties. It was, therefore, impossible that the same objections which applied to the case of a collector's servant could operate in reference to him or his banyan. Again, Mr. Hastings was accused of enriching his personal friends at the expense of the Company, because he suffered them to act as agents between the Government and the parties to whom opium might ultimately be sold in the public markets. Now let it be borne in mind, that till Mr. Hastings took the matter up, opium, considered as a source of public revenue, had been of little more than nominal value. The monopoly of the trade, as well as of the trade in salt, was, by regulation, handed over to certain of the Company's servants, who were bound, indeed, to make up a certain fixed amount of duty, but never failed, in the course of a very few years, to realize out of the residue enormous fortunes. One of the earliest of Mr. Hastings's financial reforms was to secure this monopoly to the Company. The opium was, by his directions, cultivated on the public account; it was sold, when fit for use, by public contract, and a lease, if desired, granted to the successful competitor, on terms advantageous, no doubt, to him, though at least as much so to the

Company. For, if the contractor gained a percentage on the ultimate dispersion of the article, the Government was saved the costs of bringing it to market, while a steady income was secured—a point of no mean consequence in the arrangement of the fiscal affairs both of nations and of individuals.

It was charged against Mr. Hastings, that he threw these contracts into the hands of creatures and dependants of his own, as if he had been bound to reject the offers of such, when they appeared to be more favourable than those of entire strangers.

Lastly, the cause of the Rannee of Burdwan, and of her treacherous and unprincipled son, was warmly espoused. They no sooner stood forth as accusers of the Governor-general, than all their demands were acceded to. They were loaded with honours, the majority even in this setting all precedent as well as delicacy at defiance, while arrangements into which a previous government had come, and of which the Court of Directors had delivered their unqualified approval, were coolly set aside. The following letters will show how Mr. Hastings felt under this accumulation of insult and wrong.

To Messrs. GRAHAM and MACLEANE.

Fort William, 18th May, 1775.

I have not time to detail the occurrences of the last month, but must entreat you to collect them from the extracts of consultations now sent to you. Indeed these will give you a better idea of the temper of my opponents and the nature of their transactions than could be conveyed by a mere narrative. What I foretold concerning the dismission of Deleel Roy and the restoration of the Ranny has literally taken effect. Nundoolol, having used all his efforts with Ramkishen in vain to prevent his engaging in the dirty work proposed to him, separated from him, and the majority have voted him dismissed. After Nundcomar's commitment, the young scoundrel sent an emissary to Cantoo, entreating my forgiveness, and offering to reveal the arts which had been practised on him by Nundcomar to compel him to put his seal to the petition, if I would signify my approbation of it; but the General sent for him, took a second petition in confirmation of the former, and he is now tied down to the party for ever.

The visit to Nundcomar when he was to be prosecuted for a conspiracy, and the elevation of his son to the first office of the Nizâmut when the old gentleman was in gaol and in a fair way to be hanged, were bold but successful expedients. I doubt if the people in England will approve of such barefaced declarations of their connexions with such a scoundrel, or such attempts to impede and frustrate the course of justice. Neither can I suppose that the dismission of Munny Begum, for the sake of carrying a point of party with which she has no concern, will be thought consistent with justice, honour, or common decency.

I recommend myself and my hopes entirely to your

friendship, and remain ever, my dear friends, your sincerely affectionate and faithful servant.

P. S. I now retract the resolution communicated to you separately in my letters of the 27th of March. Whatever advices the first packet may bring, I am now resolved to see the issue of my appeal, believing it impossible that men, whose actions are so frantic, can be permitted to remain in charge of so important a trust. Good God! what will be said, if it be asked with authority what the Council of India have done with the vast powers which were assigned them in the course of the last seven months; they have worried their chief, and kept every office and business of the state wholly impeded.

I must beg that the reader will pay especial attention to the postscript appended to this letter. He will thus see that the discretionary powers previously granted to Colonel MacLeane are revoked, and that Mr. Hastings declares himself resolved, for his own honour's sake, to retain the powers committed to him by Act of Parliament, till they should, by competent authority, be withdrawn. How, then, can he be said to have acted with duplicity, when, on the death of Colonel Monson, he refused to resign the chair to General Clavering? But I must let him speak for himself. The following will show that not all the annoyances to which he was subject, ever made him forgetful of the true interests and real wants of the province over which he had been placed.

To the Right Hon. Loid NORTH.

Fort William, 2nd April, 1775.

My Lord,—The assurance which your Lordship has been so obliging as to make me, that if there was any thing in the present system and arrangement which I might wish to have altered, you would be favourably disposed to attend to it, has long prompted me to offer to your Lordship my thoughts upon the general management of the affairs of this country. The subject is difficult and extensive, and requires both a vacant and composed mind to treat it properly. This has seldom been, nor is at this time, the state of mine, yet I cannot suffer the last despatches of this season to depart without communicating my opinion of such additional regulations or alterations in those already made as may be immediately wanting for rendering more complete the system which your Lordship has already so happily planned.

One of the great inconveniences to which the administration of this government has been till lately subjected is the want of a sufficient distinction between the departments of it. While the affairs of the Company were merely commercial, it was useful and even necessary that their servants should make themselves acquainted with every branch of the service. Their frequent removals from one office to another were well calculated for this purpose, and the prospect of rising in succession to the first and most lucrative employments, served to excite their industry, and was of some advantage to them in establishing their private credit while they continued in the intermediate stations, especially if they appeared to have distinguished themselves in these, the same qualifications being required for their own mercantile concerns as for those of their employers. But the vast change which has since taken place in the affairs of the Company, especially since

the acquisition of the Dewanny, required the application of principles diametrically opposite to the former practice for conducting them. The various and multiplied objects which have since occupied the attention of this government were too valuable to be delegated entirely to the charge of others, and too weighty for its immediate superintendency. The right which the former rule of the service gave to every person to succeed to vacant offices by seniority or rotation, occasioned continual changes in every office and much embarrassment in the accounts. The offices which required great labour and yielded few emoluments were ill supplied; those who were employed in them either claiming as a recompense of their services, which was never refused after a space of two, or at most three years, the succession to places of greater profit. This was chiefly the case with the offices of the accomptants and secretaries, the salaries of which were small, with scanty or no emoluments, and even those disproportioned to others of the like amount enjoyed in the country, by reason of the difference in all articles of expense in town. Added to a spirit of dissipation, occasioned by these frequent changes, the business of the service often suffered by the loss of persons removed from employments for which their talents were peculiarly adapted, and as much by the appointment of others to employments for which they were unfit. Both inconveniences have sometimes been experienced in the transfer of the same person from one office to another, and it requires little argument to show the absurdity of promoting a man who had distinguished himself by his knowledge of the investment, or his assiduity in the arrangement and distribution of stores, to the government of the country and the administration of justice.

Succession by the routine of the Company's list,

particularly to the Council, was likewise attended with great evils. It brought the Council too near on a level with the inferior branches of the service, and proved an encouragement to oppression, as few would venture to complain against men destined to hold the rod of power, and even the members of the Council themselves might not always be exempt from the influence of the same consideration or from that of a personal connexion when appealed to as judges in such grievances.

These inconveniences have been in part removed by the mode established by Parliament for supplying the vacancies of the Supreme Council, and by the institution of the Board of Trade, and the necessity for completing the other separations is become stronger by both.

I would recommend that the heads of offices should remain fixed, and the views of the assistants in each confined to promotion in their own departments. Some exceptions to this rule may occur, especially in the offices of the secretaries and Persian translators, on account of the improvements acquired in both, which qualify the possessors of them for the most difficult and important trusts in the service.

2. There is one strong objection to this restriction, namely, that it would prove a great discouragement to such of the servants as were allotted to the laborious and least profitable duties of the service, while the places of emolument were wholly engrossed by others perhaps not more deserving. The only means which occur to me for the removal of this objection are easier in speculation than practice. It is to proportion the emoluments of every office to the labour, trust, and importance of the duties dependant on it. This can hardly be effected by fixed salaries. There is a difference in the value of money between this country and

England, arising partly from the difference of expense, and more from the necessity which every man being but a sojourner in it is under of providing a competence against the time of his return to his own country, which will be for ever an insuperable obstacle to the appointment of salaries really adequate to the offices for which they are assigned, which would not appear enormous at home, besides that fixed salaries are no incitement to diligence, but are received as of course, and the services due for them reluctantly performed, and regarded as a dead and unprofitable labour. It may appear inconsistent that I should object to large salaries, and yet propose emoluments which in a less public way should yield an equal amount; but this I venture to recommend, and trust to your Lordship's wisdom for approving it. Exclusive of moderate salaries, the remainder of their allowances might be made up by a commission charged to the Company or Government, or by moderate fees received according to stated tables from individuals, as the nature of the business performed might render the application of either mode most practicable or most eligible. The commission would less sensibly appear in the public accounts, and the fees would be cheerfully paid by individuals, as they would in most cases prove the means of accelerating the despatch of business, the delays of which are often in the best regulated offices an intolerable oppression I am obliged to content myself in this place with laying down the general rule. The specification of it would take up more of my time than I can now bestow, and of your Lordship's than I could with decency claim. I will only add that I think it practicable and capable of such restrictions and subsidiary regulations as might in most instances obviate any inconvenience arising from it. It would undoubtedly prove the greatest spur to industry, and it would

be productive of this further advantage, that it would remove the pretext for prohibited or hurtful perquisites, which in spite of the wisest institutions, or the most absolute prohibitions, will exist, and be considered as tacitly allowed if the authorized emoluments are inadequate to the ordinary rates of expense.

3 The management of the revenues is an object of so much magnitude and importance that it would be imprudent to offer anything respecting it as a perfect plan drawn up precipitately and without discussion, or indeed without knowing under what authority they will continue to be collected after the expiration of the present Act; but in pursuance of the idea with which I set out, I will venture to declare to your Lordship that in my opinion, under the present system, there cannot be a mode better calculated to improve the revenue of the province than that of its superintendency by provincial councils. I would rather wish their powers enlarged than reduced, and am of opinion that an intermediate board of control might be successfully established at the capital, which should audit all accounts, and correspond with the provincial councils, referring only cases of succession to vacant zemindarries, applications for the remission or suspension of rents, general ordinances, the dismission of old farmers, the settlements with new, for decision or approbation, to the Supreme Council. This board should meet every day, which would not only promote exceedingly the despatch of business, which is the life of the collections, and preserve an uniformity in the management of the collections, but it would, by lessening the weight of affairs which are, on the present footing, an intolerable burthen on the Superior Council, enable them to give more attention to matters of greater and more general import, and render the control more effectual as it would be less interrupted.

4. The commercial branch having been so materially separated from the other departments, I judge it will be proper to make this separation still more complete. The details of commerce are not fit objects of attention to the supreme administration of a state; neither can the members who compose it be supposed to be equal judges of the justness or propriety of these transactions with those whose sole business it is to attend to and understand them. Besides, in our constitution, as it now stands, there are two authorities in the same branch, each aspiring at the exercise, but endeavouring to throw the responsibility on the other, which must unavoidably occasion delays and a want of vigour in their proceedings. A clear illustration of this appears in the proceedings respecting the freighting of the Anson and Ashburnham. The conditions of the charter parties, and the examination of the bottoms of these ships, were hardly objects of consideration at the general Board, yet they occupied a large portion of their time and attention. It appears also very evidently that the Board of Trade avoided giving their opinion on many points, and in some absolutely declined it, because they did not choose to take upon them the responsibility of advice without the power of execution. I therefore think that great benefit would accrue on all sides were that department to be enlarged so as to include every duty appertaining to the investment or in any shape connected with the commercial interest of the Company, and every office depending upon either. The execution in all that branch will then be theirs, and the responsibility theirs, and the government will only preserve that general control over them which is necessary in the administration of affairs.

It seems also highly necessary that the servants under that department should be totally dependant

on the Board of Trade. Indeed I conceive that the words of the Company's instructions imply as much, but it has not been so understood by others. I foresee great confusion, and the seeds of anarchy and disobedience existing in their constitution if it is allowed to remain on the present footing. It appears to me that the Company's servants in that line should be fixed to that only, with a positive interdiction of their removal to any other, and that they should be left entirely to the control of their own Board in the same manner as under the former system.

5. Your Lordship will doubtless be fully advised from the proper channels of the proceedings of the Court of Judicature. Its effects will naturally be represented by the public as they are felt, by some as hurtful and by others as of utility. All new institutions are liable to defect, and even the most perfect to ill consequences in their first operation, but I may venture to say this has been generally received as tending to the happiness and benefit of every British subject, and carrying the most gracious intention to the inhabitants of Bengal. The protection which it affords to the weak against oppression has already been virtually felt by many who are even unsuspicious of the source from which they derive so inestimable a blessing. But it has also proved in some cases the unavoidable cause of distress, by the total suppression of the former courts of justice within the city of Calcutta, which is become already very considerable from the number and wealth of its inhabitants; and by the weakness of the civil courts established in the other parts of the provinces, and acting under a doubtful authority.

It appears to me defective only in the inadequacy of its natural powers to the extent of its jurisdiction. I much fear that it will be found scarce possible in prac-

tice to make the distinction intended by the Act, and Charter, between such persons as are employed in the service of the Company, or of British subjects, and other native inhabitants. The mutual concerns and connexions of two classes so formed of the same people will bring almost every man of property within the sphere of the Supreme Court, independently of the necessity to which it seems unavoidably liable of exercising a temporary authority, even over those not subject to it by the Act for the purpose of ascertaining their exemption from it. The geographical measurement of the provinces of Bengal exceeds, perhaps, that of Great Britain, and the number of litigible disputes is at least as great. Judge then, my Lord, how incompetent a single court, however composed, must be for the effectual distribution of justice to such a nation.

6. I feel the weakness of my own experience when I attempt to offer a remedy for this defect, but some is surely necessary, and I should hope that the Dewanny Courts, that is, the courts subsisting by immemorial usage for the determination of litigated suits between the natives, might subsist by delegated powers from the Supreme Court, and dependent on it. Neither can I propose any alteration in the criminal courts, because, as they are constituted, I think them better calculated for the speedy correction of offences in the natives, than any other species of judicature which could be substituted in their room. These at present hold their powers from the Nabob, and are considered as a branch of the Nizâmut, but your Lordship will easily conceive that his name is but an ostensible sanction, as it would be dangerous to trust the real power in the hands of a mere pageant, who has no interest in the due exercise of it.

7. I venture to submit it to your Lordship's consi-

deration, whether it might not be attended with some good effects in establishing a good understanding between the members of the Supreme Court and of the Council, and in enabling the former the better to comprehend the nature and utility of many propositions, to be passed into laws for the good order and benefit of the country, to the knowledge of which they have not any present means of access, but in which their concurrence is equally necessary whenever such laws shall be proposed, and also for guarding the acts of the Board from any legal error, that the chief justice should have a fixed or occasional seat at the Council Board. Of the propriety or consequence of this proposition, in other respects, I am not a judge.

8. Many alterations appear to me necessary, both with respect to the management of political affairs here, and the correspondence at home. Those subjects not being of a local nature, it would be presumption in me to propose anything concerning them to your Lordship's superior judgment. Thus much only it may be permitted me to observe that the political interests of this country have suffered by nothing so much as by the fluctuation and uncertainty continually attending them, as well from variable orders from home, as from indecision here.

9. The last subject on which I wish to engage your Lordship's attention, although of equal if not superior importance to any of the preceding, I find my own feelings too much interested in, to treat it with that freedom which it deserves, although perhaps there never was a time in which I could with less hazard of incurring the imputation of seeking to add to my own consequence, impart my own sentiments upon it. I shall therefore be very brief upon it. The subject which I allude to is the definition of the powers of the Governor-general as distinguished from the Board

at large. In whatever manner it may be judged expedient to determine this point, it is of the utmost consequence that some clear and precise line be drawn, and applicable to all possible cases, to prevent disputes which will otherwise continually arise upon them. The only danger to which any extraordinary degree of power granted to the Governor can be liable, depends on the choice of the man appointed to so delicate a trust. The choice properly made, your Lordship will find, and the event will justify my assertion, that some kind of separate and independent authority must be delegated to him to enable him to discharge the executive duties of Government, and to preserve a consistency in its measures. The length of time which will be required for appeals to England, before their effects can be received, which will oftener exceed than fall short of two years, may produce so many variations in the state of affairs which existed at the time in which they were made, as to render the application of such remedies as the wisdom of Government may adopt for their safety of no effect, and such is the natural envy attendant on the first office of Government, though but ostensibly superior to the rest, that in a body so small as that of the present Council, a majority will almost always be formed against him, unless, by descending to the arts of intrigue, which will be eventually productive of evils not much less pernicious than those of total anarchy, he can find means to maintain an unsteady and uncertain supremacy.

I forbear, my Lord, to enter into a detail of this subject, or to propose the modifications of it, but beg leave to refer your Lordship (if you shall think what I have already said deserving your further attention) to a letter written by me to the Court of Directors, and dated the 11th of November, 1773, in which my sentiments will appear more at large, and, though applied

to a former constitution of this Government, will be found, if just, equally applicable to the present. I have some reason to believe that the letter which I allude to will have undergone your Lordship's inspection long before this can reach your hands, which induces me rather to refer your Lordship to it, than to take up more of your time by an unnecessary repetition.

If the general rules which I have recommended should receive the sanction of your Lordship's approval, it is my intention at some future time to submit to your Lordship a practical system formed on these principles for the government of these provinces. In the mean time, I hope your Lordship will judge favourably of this imperfect attempt, which I have prematurely made in pure respect to your Lordship's commands. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most devoted servant.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

London: Printed by W. Clowes and Sons, Stamford-street